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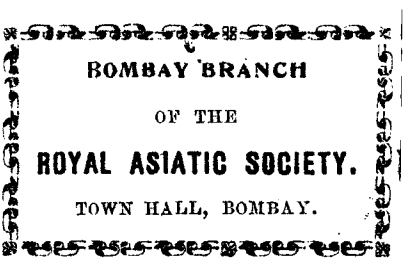

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THE WORLD-MYSTERY

THE WORLD-MYSTERY

FOUR COMPARATIVE STUDIES IN GENERAL THEOSOPHY : : BY G. R. S. MEAD

SECOND EDITION

Entirely Revised and Largely Augmented

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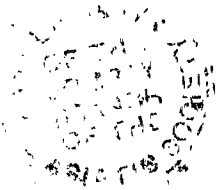

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THESE studies appeared originally in the pages of *Lucifer* (now *The Theosophical Review*) some fifteen years ago. They were republished in book-form in 1895, and have for long been out of print. I have often been asked to have them reprinted; but fifteen years' further study makes a more severe critic of one's own earlier efforts than are the majority of friendly readers, and so I have hitherto refused. Last year, however, I gave a course of four lectures based on these essays, and found that my audience followed with deep attention and appreciation the grand passages I have quoted from the ancient scriptures, even in the translations I used in the first edition. I have, therefore, retranslated many of these quotations, and revised the book from first to last, in many places rewriting it, and adding to it considerably. It is now practically a new book.

G. R. S. M.

CHELSEA.

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Āshcharyyavat pashyati kashchidenam
Āshcharyyavad vadati tathaiva chānyaḥ
Āshcharyyavach chainamanyaḥ shriṇoti
Shrutvāpyenaṁ veda na chaiva kashchit.

One sees this as a wonder,
As a wonder, too, one speaks of it,
As a wonder one hears of it,
And having heard, knows it not anyone.

BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ, ii. 29.

Ἰδού, μυστήριον ὑμῖν λεγω.

Behold, I tell you a mystery.

1 CORINTHIANS xv. 51.

Τί ἐστι Ἄνθρωπος ὅτι μιμνήσκῃ αὐτοῦ,
ἢ Ὑιὸς Ἀνθρώπου ὅτι ἐπισκέπτῃ αὐτόν;
ἠλάττωσας αὐτὸν βραχύ τι παρ' ἀγγέλους,
δόξῃ καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφάνωσας αὐτόν.

What is Man that Thou rememberest Him,
Or Son of Man that Thou regardest Him?
Thou madest Him . . . less than Angels,
[Yet] hast Thou given Him the Crown of Glory and Honour.

PSALMS viii. 4; HEBREWS ii. 7.

Ὡς οὖν ἐγένετο . . . πρὸς τὴν γῆν εἰπεῖν, ὥσπερ ἤκουσεν, ὅτι 'Πὰν ὁ μέγας τέθνηκεν.' οὐ φθῆναι δὲ παυσάμενον αὐτὸν καὶ γενέσθαι μέγαν οὐχ ἑνὸς ἀλλὰ πολλῶν στεναγμὸν ἅμα θαυμασμῷ μεμιγμένον.

And so he called out to the land, as he had heard, "Pan, the Great, is dead!" And hardly had he ceased, when there arose a mighty cry, not of one, but of many, mingled with wonderment.

PLUTARCH, *On the Cessation of Oracles*, xvii.

THE WORLD-MYSTERY

THE WORLD-SOUL

THE task that I propose is no light one; it is no less than to consider some of the opinions of my fellow-men concerning Deity, and, if possible, to point towards a common ground of agreement or reconciliation between the innumerable ideas put forward on this inexhaustible subject. I write neither as an avowed monotheist, polytheist, nor pantheist; for I would fain believe that every true lover of theosophy is sufficiently imbued with the spirit of expansion and progress and synthesis, not to condemn himself to the narrowing limits of any of these separative ideas, which cannot fail to bring him into conflict with the prejudices of some section or other of his brother-men.

I hope to find this common ground of agreement in the concept of the World-Soul in one or other of its aspects or modes; and in this attempt I despair of finding sympathy only from

the so-called atheist, whose intellectual negation is frequently, if not invariably, stultified by his actions.

For do we not find the avowed atheist searching for the reason of that which he denies to have any intelligent operation? do we not find him frequently striving for an ideal which can never be attained, if, as he supposes, the present is the outcome of the past interaction of blindly driving force and matter? Why, again, should he work for the improvement of the race if that race, as he himself, is to depart into the void, together with the producer of his and its consciousness? For the body dies and the earth will also die. And if consciousness is a product of organized matter, then the disruption of that organism means inevitably the dissipation of consciousness. Why, then, this effort to benefit that which must, on his own hypothesis, tend inevitably to annihilation?

From materialists of this kind, then, this study will gain little intellectual sympathy, although I may venture to hope that the ideals of their fellow-men which will be brought forward will meet, if not with sympathetic consideration, at least with respect.

Nor will it be any part of my task to criticize, except in the briefest manner, any of the cruder expressions of man's longing after the Divine;

but rather to put forward a number of instances of the more perfect expressions of great minds and great teachers who have in some measure sensed the actuality of that mysterious bond that makes all men one.

First, let me say that the term World-Soul is in this study not intended to carry any technical meaning such as that of the Platonic or Neoplatonic All-Soul or Soul of the Universals (ψυχὴ τοῦ παντὸς or τῶν ὅλων). "Soul" is here used in a far more general sense, and is intended to denote the underlying and containing "something" under and around every manifested natural form —that something which is of the nature of life, consciousness, or intelligence (of each or all of these), which conditions and is conditioned by that form and no other, which "benefits and is benefited in turn."

Nor would we exclude anything, not even that which in these latter days is called "inanimate," from our greater sympathy; for to our true Selves nothing that exists, not even the grain of sand, is in-*animate*, for then it would be *soul*-less, and the Divine would be excluded from a portion of Itself.

And in this sacred inquiry let us start with ourselves, where we find a soul vehicled or involved in a body, the home of innumerable "lives," vehicled again in infinitesimal cells,

each the body of a soul. And yet the soul of man is not *composed* of these "lives"; the consciousness of man is not simply the product or sum of their consciousness, nor is his intelligence a compound of their intelligence. The Soul of man is one, a self-centred unit, indestructible, imperishable, self-motive; it dies not nor comes into being.

Next, let us, taking this as a starting-point, use analogy to aid us, as we ascend towards the region of ideas, and so endeavour to pass behind the veil of the mystery between the inner and the outer. For analogy is the most fruitful method the neophyte can employ if he would widen his understanding, and without it we might well despair of the possibility of knowledge.

Every thing, or rather every soul, may be said to be the mirror of every other soul, just as in the Monadology of Leibnitz; and if it were not that a true knowledge or gnosis of one soul comprises the knowledge of all other souls, and that the cosmos is involved potentially in every atom, then, we might well believe, were our striving towards wisdom vain and our aspiration to reality likewise vain.

Taking, then, the example of the human soul, enshrined or involved in, or involving, a universe of "lives"—whether we regard it as it were a sun in the midst of its system, or as an ocean of

light in which the "lives" are bathed—let us try to conceive that there is another and more mighty Life, a Divine Soul, of which the human souls are "lives," and which we may term the Soul of Humanity. And yet this Soul is not made up of the souls of men, but is a unit of itself, self-motive, and itself, a monad.

Further—for the human mind is so constituted that nothing short of infinitude can suffice it—that this Divine Soul is in its turn a Life, one of an infinite number of "Lives" of a like degree, that enshrine a SOUL transcending them as much as man transcends the "lives" of the universe of his body.

And further still: that THAT which transcends this DIVINE is, in ITS turn, . . . But why go further? Is not the series infinite? Where can we set the term, or place a boundary, or limit Infinitude? "So far shalt thou go!" The mind in its daring loses itself in the fathomless greatness; the sublimity of its soaring deprives it of the support of the lower air of the intelligence, and it must return to earth to rest its wings.

Thus towards Infinity we rise in our ideation, conceiving every atom as the shrine of a soul and enshrined in a soul; every atom, animal, man; every globe, and system, and universe; every universe of systems, and system of universes—as the body of a soul.

For our universe is neither the first nor the last of its kind; their number is infinite. And when the consummation of our present universe is perfected there will be "another Word on the Tongue of the Ineffable," as the Gnosis has it; for the Ineffable speaks infinitely, or, as our Brāhmaṇ brethren say, there are "crores of crores of Brahmās," or universes.

Thus an infinity in one direction of thought, and equally so an infinity in the other direction. For are not the "lives" of the body, too, the souls of a universe of other invisible "lives," and these, each in its turn, the suns of still more invisible universes, until the infinitely small blends with the infinitely great and all is One?

Perhaps it may be thought by some that in this concept we have nothing but an infinite series of eternally separated entities; of infinite division; of a chaos of multiplicity; of a stupendous separateness. This might be so if it stood alone; but as, in all things here below, we can have no manifestation without the interplay of contraries, we must take its twin concept to complete it.

In Pluribus Unum et Unum in Pluribus, One in Many and in Many One. "The *essential* unity of all souls with the Over-Soul" is a fundamental postulate of the Wisdom of all ages.

That is to say, all souls are one in essence, whatever forms they may ensoul.

But—what is more; what is almost an overpowering thought, necessary though it be to universal perfectioning—not only the human soul, but even the soul of the very grain of dust (or, at any rate, of what is thought of as a physical atom) has the potentiality of expanding its "awareness" into the All-consciousness.

Every soul is endowed with the power of giving and receiving with respect to every other soul; of passing through every stage of consciousness; of "expanding"; just as the One, the All-Soul, so to say, "contracted" itself into manifestation, into the Many, subordinating Itself to Itself, that every soul might know and become every other soul, by virtue of that Love which is the cause of existence.

Thus, then, every soul aspires to union with its own essence; and this constitutes the religious spirit of mankind, and also our love of Wisdom and our search for Certainty. This constitutes that Path to the Knowledge of Divine Things which to-day we call Theosophy—that synthesis of true religion, philosophy and science; of right aspiration, right thought and right observation, which the world is ever blindly seeking.

And here we would call to mind what has been written at the beginning of this argument

concerning the "lives" of our body, and add a thought. Just so, in the religious life, are men little "lives" in the Body of the MASTER, whose consciousness, we may venture to suppose, does not normally contain the whole consciousness of each little life, but whose "Bodily" feelings are these consciousnesses.

For instance, a man does not know in his consciousness the daily life and routine of any of the little lives which make up his body; he does not know in his consciousness whether they are happy or discontented; but his body does know that the lives of these little creatures go to make up a healthy or unhealthy body. In his self-consciousness, however, he does not think of them; they contact him through his body.

And here, if we may again dare to take analogy to guide us, we would venture on a further suggestion. In some sort of way, as with men, so we may imagine it is with those who are in the state of Masterhood. On the consciousness-side of such Masterhood the powers and intelligences, it seems probable, will not be interested in the details of daily life of the little lives that make up the Body of Masterhood, for their little lives do *not* make up His consciousness. His consciousness is quite other than this; and this I believe is the Mystery of the Christ. God gave of His

own Body, in order that man through it could communicate afresh with Him.

On the body-side of such Masterhood, we may venture to believe that for the true lover of the Master, who is also the beloved disciple, every detail of every person's life will become of importance and interest, and be immediately connected with the Master. The body-side of Masterhood may thus be said to be connected with Fate and with the Passions of Humanity.

Our World-Soul, then, for us, is the One Soul of Humanity, which will differ for each soul in proportion to the state of consciousness at which it has arrived. No two souls are alike, just as no two blades of grass or grains of sand are alike; for if they were, as has been well said, there would be no reason why one should be in a particular place or state and not the other, and so the Reason of the universe be stultified.

The term "World," in our present inquiry, therefore, may be limited to the cycle of manifestation of our particular Humanity, for this is our present world—the collective embodiment of that Divine Soul, which may consequently be referred to as the World-Soul.

This Source of his being, this Essence of his nature, this Something that transcends himself in his highest self-consciousness, man calls by many names, of which the one that obtains

most generally in the Western world is, in the English tongue, "God."

And here, much as I shrink from wounding the feelings of any devout believer, I would protest against the tendency of nearly all unreflecting religionists to limit the Illimitable, to crystallize the Ocean of Being, and to materialize That, which it is blasphemy to name, much less to attempt to dress in the tawdry rags of our own mental equipment.

There are those who will talk of "God" as they would of a human acquaintance, who profess a familiarity that would outrage our feelings of decency if the object of their remarks were even a wise and holy man whom we had learned to reverence.

There are others who have such limited notions of the Divine that they cling with desperation to terms that have their origin in the most vulgar misunderstanding, and treat those who will not use their Shibboleths as "atheists," because they cannot understand that there is a reverence of the mind that transcends terms of the emotions; that there is an aspiration which transcends all endeavour to limit by the names of human qualities that Mystery who simultaneously is both the Source and End of all qualities, and also beyond them all—an aspiration to which such crudities seem little short of blasphemy. If such high

reverence is "atheism," then indeed has language lost all meaning and returned to the inarticulate.

Let us all agree that no definition is possible, and that any enunciation of the Mystery is at best but a temporary stepping-stone to higher and still higher things, and there will no longer be seen the sad spectacle of human beings trying to pour the ocean into a waterpot.

For after all what do we fear in the desperation with which we cling to such limiting terms? To me we appear to fear that, where all is so vague and abstract, the goal we propose to ourselves would, without definition, seem too far off for us ever to hope to reach it. But surely we have the infinitude within our own nature? Is there not a "Christ," which is his true Self, potential in every man; and beyond, the "Fatherhood"; and beyond, the "Father of all Fatherhoods"; and beyond—Ineffable Infinitude? But all within the nature and in the essence of every man; nothing is without, nothing outside of us or beyond us, nothing which is not of the same essence; all is That!

Is it so strange to "go home"? Is it an abstract void, a negation, to know the Fullness of the Self's true Being? Or, on the other hand, is this supreme ideal the vain exaggeration of the personal man expanded to infinity? Is such a faith dictated by self-pride and self-conceit? If such

a truly reverent longing, the natural expression of the soul's filial love, should be condemned by any, they will first have to show that the great World-teachers have spoken falsely, for the word of no lesser men can come before Their teaching. One and all, the great Teachers have inculcated the certainty of this wisdom and gnosis; and it requires but little study to find how admirably it explains many a seeming contradiction in the general pages of the world-scriptures.

"Be humble if thou wouldst attain to wisdom"; but do not debase yourself. Humility is not slavishness; reverence is not fawning. How can Deity take pleasure in abasement which a noble-minded man could never view without the greatest pity? "I am but as a worm in thy sight," David is believed to have said; and there are those who rejoice to echo the phrase literally, not knowing the meaning of the mystery-word, that this same "worm," that is the "scorn of men," but not of God, is the "serpent of wisdom," kin with the Divine.

For how can even the body, much less the *man*, the mind, or thinker, be so debased? Each is most honourable in its own domain, and only dishonourable in proportion as it fails to "do its mystery" in sacrifice to the Self, whose "Grace" or Good-will is its very life and being and the well-spring of its action. It is the duty of man

to "worship" the Deity and not to grovel; to present that which is "worthy" to the Self, and not to delight in debasement; to value rightly or search out the true worth of the Divine, of Whom he is, and in Whom he lives and moves and has his being.

"And so . . . with fear and trembling work out your own salvation; for the Worker in you, both as to willing and working for well-pleasing, is Deity."*

And if that Worker is the Divine Self, what reason is there that It should humble Itself, or debase Itself? For the very Power that makes man work out his own salvation is that Deity Itself.

We shall now be able to understand the words of Kṛishṇa, in the *Bhagavad Gītā* (vii. 21, 22):

"Whichever form [of Deity] a worshipper longs with faith to worship, 'tis I who make his faith steady.

"Endowed with that faith, he strives in the worship of that [form], and obtains therefrom his desires; 'tis I who decree the benefits."†

* ὥστε . . . μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου τὴν ἑαυτῶν σωτηρίαν κατεργάζεσθε. Θεὸς γάρ ἐστιν ὁ ἐνεργῶν ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ τὸ θέλειν καὶ τὸ ἐνεργεῖν ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐδοκίας.—Phil. ii. 12, 13.

† *Yo yo yāṁ yāṁ tanuṁ bhaktaḥ shraddhayā'rchitum ichchhati,*
Tasya tasyāchalāṁ shraddhāṁ tāmeva viddhāmyaham.
Sa tayā shraddhyā yuktustasyārādhanamīhate,
Labhate cha tataḥ kāmān mayaiva vihitān hitān.

And again (ix. 23):

"Those devotees of other deities also who worship endowed with faith, they too, O Son of Kuntī, worship Me indeed, though not according to the ancient rule." *

For Kṛishṇa is the World-Soul, the Self of all men (x. 20):

"O Lord of Doubt, I am the Self seated in the heart of all beings. I am the beginning and middle and end of all creatures." †

And that none may think that all this is bald assertion and unsupported statement, let us collect some evidences of wisdom from various climes and races and times, testimony as convincing and unimpeachable to the soul-knower as any that the modern scientist possesses for his five-sense facts.

The wealth of material is so great that it is difficult to cull a passage here and there and leave so much unnoticed. Neither is it easy to know in what order to take our selections from the world-religions—whether to take them in sequence of time or dignity of contents.

Let us begin with the oldest scriptures of our

* *Ye'py anyadevatābhaktā yajante shraddhayā'nvitāḥ,*
Te'pi māmeva Kaunteya yajantyavidhipūrvakam.

† *Ahamātmā Guḍākesha sarvabhutāshyasthitaḥ,*
Ahamādishcha madhyamcha bhūtānāmanta eva cha.

Āryan race, the Vedas, and continue with the greatest of the Purāṇas. Next let us take a glance at Taoism, the most mystical of the creeds of the Far East; then pass to the Avesta, that ancient Īrānian scripture of the Pārsīs; and so on to Egypt; first quoting from the Zohar and other Kabalistic writings which contain some reflection of the wisdom of the Chaldæans and Egyptians and of the Hellenistic Gnōsis, and furnish a key to the misunderstood scriptures of the Jews. Egypt will bring us to speak of the wisdom of Thrice-greatest Hermes and the Christianized Gnōsis of those who are now known generally as Gnostics; and this will lead to a quotation from Paul and some reference to Greek and Roman philosophy, and the ancient systems ascribed to Orpheus and other great teachers of Hellas. Finally, we shall find identical ideas among the Scandinavian peoples, and a striking confirmation in Mohammedan Sufiism.

All the writers of these scriptures, without exception, have sensed the World-Soul, hymned of It, sought union with It; for of what else could they speak? They have glorified that which It is in Its essence, and do not worship Its grosser and more impermanent manifestations, the changing surface of five-sense nature. Such an idolatry was reserved for these latter days, when human intellect worships the ground

its body treads on, the gross body of the World-Soul, and has forgotten whence it came and whither it will return. To-day is an age of popular deification of matter and the consequent debasement of ideals.

Thus, then, let us first turn to that mysterious link with the past, the *Ṛig Veda*. Who knows whence it came? Who can tell its origin? Perchance those who can read the hidden world-record since the great Deluge of Atlantis could name its transmitters, and tell of those who withdrew to the "Sacred Island."

Among prayers to the Supreme Principle, the World-Soul, first must come the famous Gāyatrī, "the holiest verse in the Vedas." It runs as follows, in what Wilson calls "Sir William Jones's translation of a paraphrastic interpretation":

"Let us adore the Supremacy of that Divine Sun, the Godhead, Who illuminates all, Who recreates all, from Whom all proceed, to Whom all must return, Whom we invoke to direct our Understandings aright in our Progress toward His Holy Seat." *

This *mantra* is found in the 10th Hymn of the 4th Ashṭaka (Eighth) of the Saṁhitā (Col-

* Sir W. Jones's *Works*, xiii. 367. "His Holy Seat" suggests the thought that the state where He does not move is fixed.

lection) of the *Ṛig Veda*, not as in the above expanded paraphrase, but in an abbreviated form; for "such is the fear entertained of profaning this text, that copyists of the Vedas not unfrequently refrain from transcribing it," says Wilson.* "It is the duty of every Brāhmaṇ to repeat it *mentally* in his morning and evening devotions." It is almost to be suspected that the Western world has not received the correct text, for it is well known that the Brāhmaṇs are the proudest and most exclusive people in the world where the secrets of their religion are concerned, and it is reasonable to suppose that a master *mantra* which pertains to initiation would not be lightly revealed. But perhaps this is raising an unnecessary suspicion.

The subtle metaphysical and mystical interpretations of this most sacred formula, especially those of the Vedānta school, testify to its sanctity. The number of interpretations also to which the words of the *mantra* lend themselves is very great. The phrasing, for instance, can be taken as neuter or masculine, and so on.

The spirit of the central thought of the Indian religious world may be further exemplified by another Hymn translated by Sir William Jones. It reiterates the most clear-seeing intuition of the human mind, the feeling of identity with the

* *Viṣhṇu Purāṇa*, ii. 251.

World-Soul, in a magnificent litany which runs as follows:

"May that Soul (Ātman) of mine, which mounts aloft in my waking hours, as an ethereal spark, and which, even in my slumber, has a like ascent, soaring to a great distance, as an emanation from the Light of lights, be united by devout meditation with the Spirit supremely blest, and supremely intelligent!

"May that Soul of mine, by means similar to which the low-born perform their menial works, and the wise, deeply versed in sciences, duly solemnize their sacrificial rite; that Soul, which was itself the primal oblation placed within all creatures, be united by devout meditation with the Spirit supremely blest, and supremely intelligent!

"May that Soul of mine, which is a Ray of perfect Wisdom, pure Intellect and permanent Existence, which is the inextinguishable Light fixed within created bodies, without which no good act is performed, be united by devout meditation with the Spirit supremely blest, and supremely intelligent!

"May that Soul of mine, in which, as an immortal Essence, may be comprised whatever has past, is present, or will be hereafter; by which the sacrifice, where seven ministers officiate, is properly solemnized, be united by

devout meditation with the Spirit supremely blest, and supremely intelligent!

"May that Soul of mine, into which are inserted, like the spokes of a wheel in the axle of a car, the holy texts of the Vedas, into which is interwoven all that belongs to created forms, be united by devout meditation with the Spirit supremely blest, and supremely intelligent!

"May that Soul of mine, which, *distributed in other bodies*, guides mankind, as a skilful charioteer guides his rapid horses with reins; that Soul which is fixed in my breast, exempt from old age, and extremely swift in its course, be united by devout meditation with the Spirit supremely blest, and supremely intelligent!" *

If an interpretation of the last two shlokas may be ventured upon, I would suggest that as to what we may call the mind-side of things, the "holy texts of the Vedas," that is, of the Gnōses of God, are the sacred words (*logoi*) or justified utterances, the sounds or forth-soundings, which go straight from axle to circumference, and keep the soul spherical. Without those sacred sounds from the mouth of Brahmā, the Logos, or World-Soul, we should all return to soul-sparks, or be extinct. Those sacred sounds may be said to be the rays which proceed from

* Sir W. Jones's *Works*, xiii. 372, 373.

the stillness, or hub of the Soul, in all directions. They are the powers which cause consciousness to spread itself in space; they are the props or supports of all spherical things.

In connection with the last shloka it is hardly necessary to remind the reader of the famous image in Plato. Here men are to be thought of as horses, and we are to think of the Soul as lines of consciousness between them all, and of all the varying lines of consciousness as reins which are in the hands, or directed by the Ātmic Powers, of the Charioteer, the World-Soul. Each little man-soul is a rein connecting the man with the Great Charioteer of the universe. And here again we see how the Over-Soul is linked up with every horse by means of reins, yet He Himself is other than all the reins added together.

Our Hymn is an instance of the theosophy buried in the Vedas, in the face of which it is difficult to understand the criticisms of the once paramount Weber-Müllerite school, which would have set it *all* down to the imaginings of a primitive pastoral people. The theosophical student is glad to turn to a fairer estimate, such as that of Barth, who says:

"Neither in the language nor in the thought of the *Ṛig Veda* have I been able to discover that quality of primitive natural simplicity which

so many are fain to see in it. The poetry it contains appears to me, on the contrary, to be of a singularly refined character and artificially elaborated, full of allusions and reticences, of pretensions to mysticism and theosophic insight; and the manner of its expression is such as reminds one more frequently of the phraseology in use among certain small groups of initiated than the poetic language of a large community." †

Truly so; and perhaps ere long the methods of the Veda may be better understood, and it will be recognized that the powers of nature and the moral attributes of man are fitter aids towards the realization of mystic theogony than are personifications which include all his vices and his pettiness. As H. W. Wallis says:

"The deities of the *Ṛig Veda* differ essentially from the Gods of Greek or Scandinavian mythology and of the *Mahābhārata*, in the abstract and almost impersonal nature of their characters. They are little more than factors in the physical and moral order of the world, apart from which none, except perhaps Indra, has a self-interested existence."†

To the Greek, Scandinavian and Mahābhāratan deities we may add the Pantheons of other

* *The Religions of India*, p. xiii.

† *Cosmogony of the Ṛig Veda*, p. 8.

nations as well. The "self-interest" of their Indras, Zeuses, Jehovahs, and the rest, is explicable when we remember that they are representations of the spirit of national time-periods, manifestations of group-minds, for there are crores of such Brahmās, Jupiters, and Jehovahs in the cosmos.

It is time that the Western nations should remember their birthplace. We are not Semites but Āryans, a younger branch of the great Āryan race, perchance, but still Āryans and not Semites. And being so we should remember the wisdom of our fathers, and put aside the earlier cruder conceptions of one of the later Semite nations as to Deity. The pre-exilic Jehovah is in his place as the God of a small warlike nomad tribe, but entirely out of place in the religion of those who profess to be followers of the Christ. It is high time to lay aside such naïve anthropomorphism, which the post-exilic learned Jews themselves rejected, as their Kabalah, or Tradition, and as Philo of Alexandria, prior to Christianity, well testify. The self-limitation of many a mind in Christendom to-day is belief in this "jealous" and "self-interested" Jehovah as the One God, an idea alien to Āryan thought. Direful indeed has been the effect of the "curse" of the "chosen people" on their spoliators. They were robbed

of their Scriptures, deprived of them by force; and the ravished maiden of Jewry, forced against her will into the arms of the marauding Āryans, has used her "magic arts" against the folk who hold her prisoner, for to-day she imprisons the *minds* of those who hold her *body* captive.

In other words, the Western nations, being the youngest of the Āryan family, and lusty mainly in body, have in the past given their popular worship to the dead-letter of that which they have not understood, and so enslaved their minds and characters with a bibliolatry begotten of formalism by a Rabbinism divorced from the true spirit of prophecy. Let us hope that all this is past, and that the twentieth century may see the "prodigal" return "home," and, chastened by the experience of his exile, show his real heredity in an activity that his more sluggish elder brother in the East, who has never left home, cannot, perchance, manifest in such abundance. The Āryans have an ancestral religion; and every Āryan in the West should see to it that he does not pursue after what is a stranger to his blood, to the rejection of what has been appointed for him. The effort of the Christ was originally an attempt to universalize religion, and to make active the spirit of all the traditions of the time and region in which He energized; and the Āryan tradition should not be excluded.

Of course in the above I speak of the crude ideas of God held by the Hebrew populus, and not of the Mystery-Deity, the Father, preached openly to His contemporaries by the Master whom the Jews called Jeschu ha-Notzri, and whom the West calls Jesus the Nazarene. For did He not say mystically that His hearers were "of their father the devil," for they were "Abraham's seed," and "Abraham" was the Ruler of this world? Nor do I mean any disrespect to the Jews of to-day, who are no more the Jews of the earlier Bible than we are Goths or Vandals, or woad-besmeared Britons. I do not write about, or for, "bodies"; I am writing for "minds" and "souls" whose ancestry is divine, and not of the Lord of the Body, call him by what name we may.

How long will the little mind of man persist in telling us the fashion in which God, the Great Mind, "created the world"; how long will men ignorantly speak of That which is unutterable, and degrade the majesty of their Divine Souls into the poor imaginings of little minds which think in terms of their bodies? More reverently indeed did our ancesters phrase the mystery. How different are the beginnings of cosmogony as sung of in the *Rig Veda*! The passage is doubtless familiar to many of my readers in the

noble verse of Colebrooke; but it should be made familiar to all.

Nor Aught nor Naught existed; yon bright sky
Was not, nor heaven's broad roof outstretched above.
What covered all? What sheltered? What concealed?
Was it the Water's fathomless Abyss?
There was no Death—yet there was naught immortal;
There was no Confine betwixt Day and Night.
The Only One breathed breathless by Itself;
Other than It there nothing since has been.
Darkness there was; and all at first was veiled
In Gloom profound—an Ocean without Light.
The Germ that still lay covered in the Husk
Burst forth, One Nature, from the fervent Heat.

. . . . . .

Who knows the Secret? Who proclaimed it here?
Whence, whence this manifold Creation sprang?
The Gods themselves came later into Being:
Who knows from whence this Great Creation sprang?
THAT whence this All, this Great Creation came—
Whether Its Will created or was mute,
The Most-High Seer that is in highest Heaven,
He knows it—or perchance He even knows it not.

Gazing into Eternity . . .
Ere the foundations of the Earth were laid
Thou wert. And when the subterranean Flame
Shall burst its Prison and devour the Frame,
Thou shalt be still as Thou were e'er before,
And know no Change, when Time shall be no more—
O, Endless Thought, Divine Eternity!*

* *Rig Veda*, x. 129.

The following is another and more literal version :

"The non-existent was not, and the existent was not at that time; there was no air or sky beyond. What was covering in? and where? under shelter of what? was there water—a deep depth?

"Death was not nor immortality then; there was no discrimination of night and day. That one thing breathed without a wind [? breath] of its own self. Apart from it there was nothing else at all beyond.

"Darkness there was, hidden in darkness, in the beginning; everything here was an indiscriminate chaos. It was void covered with emptiness, all that was. That one thing was born by the power of warmth.

"So in the beginning arose desire, which was the first seed of mind. The wise found out by thought, searching in the heart, the parentage of the existent in the non-existent.

"Their line was stretched across. What was above? what was below? There were generators, there were mighty powers; *svadhā* below, the presentation of offerings above.

"Who knoweth it forsooth? who can announce it here? whence it was born, whence this creation is? The gods came by the creating of it (*i.e.*

the one thing). Who then knoweth whence it is come into being?

"Whence this creation is come into being, whether it was ordained or no—He whose eye is over all in the highest heaven, He indeed knoweth it, or may be He knoweth it not." *

Even such a wooden translation as the one we have just been reading cannot prevent the grandeur of the original occasionally peeping through. But how much more noble are the lines of Colebrooke; and how much still more noble might be the version of a poet-scholar who had sensed the mystery!

Notice the last lines. Our World-Soul may know, or perchance even He knoweth not. For there are other World-Souls more transcendent still. None knoweth absolutely but the One and Only One.

If, then, we would venture so greatly as to try to lift a tiny corner of the veil of this ultimate mystery, we can do so only by trying to sympathize with the thought of the singer of the sacred verses.

I need hardly point out the similarity of this vision of cosmogenesis with other of the most ancient cosmogonies known to us—for instance, from the traditions of Chaldæa and Egypt, from

* Wallis, *Cosmogony of the Ṛig Veda*, pp. 59, 60.

the fragments of Orphicism and the remains of the Trismegistic sermons.

I would first suggest that from one point of view we may regard the Non-existent as Spirit or Consciousness, and the Existent as Matter. These have to wed in the supreme Sacred Marriage, the Unceasing Union, the Great Work, in order to become self-conscious. They then become Form.

"Heat" or "Warmth" is perhaps the power of expansion, a manifestation of this Holy Desire, the Divine Erōs, or Pothos, in Greek. The "one thing" that was born was not as yet Form, we may believe, but the one substance or element, in which everything is compressed into sameness and essence.

The Desire (Kāma) that arose in It, is thus the Desire of Spirit for Matter and of Matter for Spirit.

This Desire is said to come before Thought. So also in the case of the small cosmos or man, we may say, in terms familiar to some of our readers, that *buddhi* is the beginning of man. There arises in buddhic substance a desire to become self-consciousness. It thus splits up into mental planes. Desire may be said to be the realization of incompleteness by Spirit and Matter.

The gnosis of the "parentage of the existent

in the non-existent" is to be discerned only by the wise in spiritual contemplation; that is to say, perhaps, that such minds alone find out how to get from consciousness to self-consciousness; from universals to particulars, or to persons.

The "line" of the next shloka may perhaps be taken as the limit which makes universals become particulars. The "generators" below may be considered as masculine powers, and the "presentation of offerings" above as feminine receptivity or resignation ready to be worked upon; suggesting the birth of the first duality, a division into power and suffering or passion. The offerings may thus be thought of as the sacrifice of Spirit to Matter.

In the next verse the gods are said to proceed from the One Godhead at the birth of the first substance; these gods live within the buddhic element. The true "Beginning" of things is before even this. These gods or powers within matter first had bequeathed on them self-consciousness; instead of being simple nature powers they became gods.

In the last verse "this creation" (or emission or emanation) seems to connote the coming forth into the formal plane-side of things conditioned by the Great Mind.

The World-Soul does not know. Perhaps this dark saying may be understood from the reflec-

tion that one never can know what one does oneself. We have to be outside and apart from a thing to know it. Really to know one must be able to unite oneself with, and separate oneself from, either and both, for true knowledge sees from within and without. Hence without "sin" and "Satan" man could never know God. The first thing for real knowledge is to separate oneself from and then unite in experience.

Passing next to a later Hindū-Āryan scripture, let us read how the great sect of the Vaiṣhnavas hymn the Deity, as written in the *Viṣhṇu Purāṇa*:

"OṀ! Glory to Him who dwells in all beings (Vāsudeva). Victory be to Thee, Thou heart-pervading one (Puṇḍarīkākṣha). Adoration be to Thee, Thou cause of the existence of all things (Vishvabhāvana). Glory be to Thee, Lord of the senses (Hṛiṣhīkesha), Supreme Spirit (Mahāpuruṣha), Ancient of birth (Pūrvaja)." *

And later in the same work we read:

"Salutation to Thee, Who art uniform and manifold, all-pervading, Supreme Spirit, of inconceivable glory, and Who art simple existence! Salutation to Thee, O inscrutable, Who art

* *V.P.*, I. i.; Wilson's translation, i. 1, 2.

Truth, and the essence of oblations!* Salutation to Thee, O Lord, Whose nature is unknown, Who art beyond Primeval Matter, Who existest in five Forms,† as one with the Elements, with the Faculties, with Matter, with the Living Soul, with Supreme Spirit!

"Show favour, O Soul of the Universe, essence of all things, perishable or eternal, whether addressed by the designation of Brahmā,‡ Viṣhṇu, Shiva, or the like. I adore Thee, O God,§ Whose nature is indescribable, Whose purposes are inscrutable, Whose name, even, is unknown.

"For the attributes of appellation or kind are not applicable to Thee, Who art THAT,

* An oblation is a sacrifice, or the setting aside in order to perceive; just as we have to get outside a thing in order to understand it, we have to separate ourselves from it. A sacrifice in this sense is that which is set aside, something apart; something which for certain purposes, in order to accomplish certain results, we choose to consider sacred. Sacrifice, therefore, embraces the idea of limit for a purpose, a setting aside, a breaking-off of a fraction, or consecration of a portion, that the whole may ultimately be consecrated.

† These are given by Wilson (i. 3) as: 1, Bhūtātman, one with created things, or Puṇḍarīkākṣha; 2, Pradhānātman, one with crude nature; or Vishvabhāvana; 3, Indriyātman, one with the senses, Hṛiṣhīkesha; 4, Paramātman, Supreme Spirit, or Mahāpuruṣha; and 5, Ātman, Living Soul, animating nature, and existing before it, or Pūrvaja.

‡ Masculine.

§ Parameshvara, Supreme Lord, rather.

the supreme Brahma,* eternal, unchangeable, uncreated.†

"But as the accomplishment of our objects cannot be attained except through some specific form, Thou art termed by us Kṛishṇa, Achyuta (Imperishable), Ananta (Endless), or Vishṇu.

"Thou, unborn (Divinity), art all the object of these impersonations; Thou art the gods, and all other beings; Thou art the whole world; Thou art All.

"Soul of the Universe, Thou art exempt from change; and there is nothing except Thee in this whole existence.

"Thou art Brahmā, Pashupati,‡ Aryaman, Dhātṛi, and Vidhātṛi;§ thou art Indra,‖ Air,

* Neuter. † Aja, unborn, rather.

‡ Shiva, "Lord of (sacred) animals."

§ Aryaman and Dhātṛi are two of the Twelve Ādityas, or Sons of Aditi (the Boundless, Infinity), the "Mother," which were seven originally, Mārtāṇḍa, the "rejected" Sun, being the eighth. Later they became the Twelve Sun-Gods. Vidhātṛi is the arranger or disposer, the Kosmokratōr or Demiurge, and is added as a title to Brahmā, Vishvakarman (the Omnificent) and Kāma (Desire or Love), the Erōs of the Orphic fragments. As Dr Muir says: "This Kāma or Desire, not of sexual enjoyment, but of good in general, is celebrated in a curious hymn of the *Atharva Veda*: 'Kāma was born first [the Orphic Prōtogonos]. Him, neither gods, nor fathers, nor men have equalled. Thou art superior to these, and for ever great.'"

‖ The "Zeus dwelling in the Æther" of Homer (Ζεὺς *αἰθέρι ναίων—Iliad*, ii. 412); in the Æther, the Abode of the Gods. The Pater Æther of Virgil.

Fire, the Regent of the Waters;* the God of Wealth,† and Judge of the Dead;‡ and Thou, though but one, presidest over the world, with various energies addressed to various purposes.

* Varuṇa (Ooaroona), the Regent of the "Astral" Waters of Space; the Uranus (Ouranos) of the Greeks, who was emasculated and dethroned by Kronos (by mystical word-play or sound-sympathy, equated with Chronos, Time), at the instigation of his mother and wife Gaea (Earth). From the drops of his Blood (? Fire) sprang the Gigantes or Titans, and from the Foam (? Air and Water mixed) that gathered round his limbs in the Sea, sprang Venus Aphroditē (Hesiod, *Theog.*, 180–195). The Giants may be taken to represent great monadic forces in "bodies"; Aphroditē may be taken to denote the great buddhic plane (Mahābuddhi).

† Kuvera, the Keeper of the Treasures of the Earth, Lord of the Earth, called the Egg of Jewels, Ratnagarbha.

‡ Antaka the "Ender," a title of Yama, the "Restrainer," the Judge of the Dead. A Vedic Hymn tells us that Yama "was the first of men that died, and the first that departed to the [celestial] world." As Dowson says: "He it was who found out the way to the home which cannot be taken away: 'Those who are now born [follow] by their own paths to the place whither our ancient fathers have departed.'" This, in the more direct tradition of the Vedas, is a glyph of the Race that brought

> ". . . . death into the world
> And all our woe, with loss of Eden."

But Yama, in the later traditions Pitṛipati and Pretarāja, the "Lord of the Manes" and "King of the Ghosts," was also Dharmarāja, "King of Justice," our *Selves* who judge ourselves, in the clear Ākāshic Light, while Chitragupta (the "Hidden Painting or Writing"), the Scribe of Yama, reads the imprint of our virtues and our vices from the Agrasandhānī or "Great Record," the Tablets of the World-Memory. Yama is represented as of a green colour, clothed with red.

"Thou, identical with the Solar Ray, createst the universe; all Elementary Substance is composed of* Thy qualities; and Thy Supreme Form is denoted by the imperishable term Sat.† . . .

"To Him Who is one with True Knowledge; Who is, and is not, perceptible, I bow. Glory be to Him, the Lord Vāsudeva!"‡

The same strain of adoration is still further emphasized in the Hymn of the Yogins when Viṣhṇu, in the Boar Incarnation, or Varāha Avatāra, raised the Earth out of the Waters:

"THOU ART, O God; there is no supreme condition but Thee."§

Or again, as the God Brahmā prays to the Supreme Hari (Viṣhṇu):

"We glorify Him, Who is all things; the Lord supreme over all; unborn, imperishable; the Protector of the mighty ones of creation, the unperceived,‖ indivisible Nārāyaṇa;¶ the

* "Composed of" might be omitted. This "substance" is better thought of as consciousness or spirit in a state of different qualities.

† That is, "Being."

‡ *V.P.*, V. xviii.; Wilson's trans., v. 14–16.

§ *Ibid.*, I. iv., i. 63.

‖ Aprakāsha: Fitzedward Hall tells us that the commentator explains this to mean "Self-illuminated."

¶ The Son of Nara (Man); also so called because the Waters (Narāḥ) were His first Ayaṇa or place of motion.

smallest of the small, the greatest of the great Elements; in Whom are all things; from Whom are all things; Who was before existence; the God who is all beings; Who is the End of ultimate objects; Who is beyond Final Spirit, and is one with Supreme Soul; Who is contemplated, as the cause of final Liberation, by Sages anxious to be free." *

As the Avatāra Kṛishṇa, He is hymned of by Indra after his defeat by Him:

"Who is able to overcome the unborn, unconstituted Lord, Who has willed to become a mortal, for the good of the world?" †

And when Kṛishṇa is *nailed* by the arrow to the *tree*,‡ and the Kali Yuga begins, this is how Arjuna, his beloved companion, laments the departure of the Christ-Spirit, the Mediator, of That which "unites Entity to Non-entity":

"Hari, Who was our strength, our might, our heroism, our prowess, our prosperity, our brightness, has left us, and departed. Deprived of Him, our Friend, illustrious, and ever kindly speaking, we have become as feeble as if made of straw. Puruṣhottama,§ Who was the living

* *V.P.*, I. ix.; i. 139. † *V.P.*, V. xxx.; v. 103.

‡ The Christ-consciousness is nailed by the Arrow of Truth to the Tree of Life. Absolute Truth, not relative truth, is the shaft from the realms of Reality to our worlds below.

§ Lit., the Man Supreme.

vigour of my weapons, my arrows, and my bow, is gone. As long as we looked upon Him, fortune, fame, wealth, dignity, never abandoned us. But Govinda * is gone from among us. . . . Not I alone, but Earth, has grown old, miserable and lustreless, in His absence. Kṛishṇa . . . is gone!" †

The "vigour of my arrows and my bow" seems to refer mystically to the great male and female force in the universe, without which the "Earth" grows old, that is, cannot rejunevate or re-create or refresh itself. It loses its "lustre," that is, does not reflect the true Light.

Let us next pass to China and the Far East. Lao-tzŭ, perhaps the greatest of the Chinese masters, teaches as follows, in his sublime work the *Tao-Teh-King*, or "The Book of the Perfection of Nature": ‡

"There was a time when Heaven and Earth did not exist, but only an unlimited Space in which reigned absolute immobility. All visible things and all which possess existence, were born in that Space from a mighty Principle, Which

* That is, the Herdsman, the same as the Shepherd of Western tradition.

† *V.P.*, V. xxxviii.; v. 161.

‡ See *A Study on the Popular Religion of the Chinese*, by J. J. M. de Groot. Translated from the Dutch in *Les Annales du Musée Guimet*, ii. 692 *et seq.*

existed by Itself, and from Itself developed Itself, and Which made the heavens revolve and preserved the universal life; a Principle as to which philosophy declares we know not the name, and Which for that reason it designates by the simple appellation Tao, which we may nearly describe as the Universal Soul of Nature, the Universal Energy of Nature, or simply as Nature."

And in speaking of the mysterious Tao,* the That which cannot be translated, the nameless Principle, we may with advantage quote from an essay by a sympathetic scholar, who writes † as follows:

"We are told that It has existed from all eternity. Chuang-tzŭ, the ablest writer of the Taoist school, says that there never was a time when It was not. Lao-tzŭ, the reputed founder of Taoism, affirms that the image of It existed before God Himself.‡ It is all-pervasive; there is no place where It is not found. It fills the universe with its grandeur and sublimity; yet It is so subtle that It exists in all its plenitude

* There are, I am well aware, endless controversies as to the correct rendering of this mystery-name, but this is not the place to discuss the question.

† See "Taoism," an essay by Frederic H. Balfour, in *Religious Systems of the World*, p. 77.

‡ That is here God as the Logos.

in the tip of a thread of gossamer. It causes the sun and moon to revolve in their appointed orbits, and gives life to the most microscopic insect. Formless, It is the source of every form we see; inaudible, It is the source of every sound we hear; invisible, It is that which lies behind every external object in the world; inactive, It yet produces, sustains and vivifies every phenomenon which exists in all the spheres of being. It is impartial, impersonal, and passionless;* working out its ends with the remorselessness of fate, yet abounding in beneficence to all."

And later on he quotes as follows from Chuang-tzŭ:

"There was a time when all things had a beginning. The time when there was yet no beginning had a beginning itself. There was a beginning to the time when the time that had no beginning had not begun. There is existence and there is also non-existence. In the time which had no beginning there existed No-thing. . . . When the time which had no beginning had not yet begun, then there also existed No-thing. Suddenly, there was

* "Passionless" because It is only in relation to Itself. It has no relation to anything other than Itself; whereas Passion suggests oneself and another, oneself and something other than oneself.

No-thing; but it cannot be known, respecting existence and non-existence, what was certainly existing and what was not."

I have given the above as a specimen of subtle metaphysical speculation, and also as an example to show the utter inadequacy of words to express ideas. The mind loses itself in endeavouring to transcend itself, even to the extent of appearing entirely incomprehensible to those who have not seriously approached the contemplation of that supreme intuition of humanity, the essential Unity of all things.

But no one should think that this No-thing* is an empty abstraction and pure negation; it transcends our finite concepts, but is no less the One Reality because of that. It is the right valuation of these great problems that inspires such noble concepts of existence and calm contemplation of "death" as those expressed in the words of Lieh-tzŭ.

"Death is to life as going away is to coming. How can we know that to die here is not to be born elsewhere? How can we tell whether, in their eager rush for life, men are not under a delusion? How can I tell whether, if I die to-day, my lot may not prove far preferable to what it was when I was originally born? . . .

* That is to say, nothing we can *think* of.

Ah! men know the dreadfulness of Death; but they do not know its rest. . . . How excellent is it, that from all antiquity Death has been the common lot of men! It is repose for the good man, and a hiding-away of the bad. Death is just a going-home-again. The dead are those who have gone home, while we, who are living, are still wanderers." *

Death is indeed a "going-home," but a "going-home" that need not be delayed until the body dies. Mystics understand the meaning of the phrase "those who go home" when they have "died" to their lower natures, and who then know the real nature of this illusory existence, although, as the Ṛiṣhi Nārada reported, it was very pleasant for those "who had forgotten their birthplace." The Soul of Humanity, the World-Soul, weeps for her children, who forget their Mother and, "prodigal sons" that they are, fill their bellies with husks of the swine.

Continuing our depredations from the shelves of the world-library, we pass to ancient Persia, or whatever country gave to the world the wisdom of the old Avesta. Written in a language hardly yet plainly decipherable, it may well be approximated to the Vedas in antiquity,

* *Op. cit.*, p. 81.

and its language be referred to one of the first branchlets of the mother of Sanskrit.

In the Zervanist system of the Mazdæans of Asia Minor* Zervān Akarana, "Time without Bounds," is the ineffable All; in this arises Ahura Mazda, the World-Soul, whose names are many. He is The Being and the One Existence; the One, Who was, Who is and Who shall ever be. He is Pure Spirit and the Spirit of Spirits; Omniscient and Omnipotent, the Supreme Sovereign. He is beneficent, benevolent, and merciful to all. In the *Dinkard* (ii. 81) He is described as:

"Supreme Sovereign, wise Creator, Supporter, Protector, Giver of good things, virtuous in actions and merciful."

Let us next see what the Kabālah has to teach us, and mark the difference of its great large spirit from the lesser things we have grown used to in the orthodox tradition.

Solomon ben Yehudah Ibn Gebirol, of Cordova, perhaps the greatest of the mediæval Kabalistic adepts, thus sings of the World-Soul, or the Supreme Principle, in one of his philosophical Hymns, called "Kether Malkuth," or "The Crown of the Kingdom":

"Thou art God, Who supportest, by Thy

* See my *Thrice-greatest Hermes*, i. 400.

Divinity, all the things formed, and sustains all the existences by Thy Unity. Thou art God, and there is not any distinction established between Thy Divinity, Thy Unity, Thy Eternity, and Thy Existence; because all is only One Mystery, and, although the names may be distinct, all have only one meaning.

"Thou art Wise. Wisdom which is the fountain of life floweth from Thee; and compared with Thy Wisdom, all the knowledge of mankind is foolishness.

"Thou art Wise, being from all Eternity; and Wisdom was always nourished by Thee.

"Thou art Wise; and Thou hast not acquired Thy Wisdom from another than Thyself.

"Thou art wise; and from Thy Wisdom Thou hast made a determining Will, as the workman or artist does, to draw the Existence from the No-Thing, as the light which goes out of the eye extends itself. Thou didst draw from the Source of Light without the impression of any seal, that is, form, and Thou madest all without any instrument." *

See how the mind of this learned Jew regarded the mystery of the "creation" of the universe. Deity, out of Its Wisdom which is Itself, emanates or evolves a determining Will to draw "Existence" from the "No-Thing,"

* Myer's *Qabbalah*, p. 3.

the potentiality of that same Wisdom, for it is No-Thing in that It transcends all and every *thing* we can think of, that is to say, the highest conceptions of human thought. But It is no more "Nothing" than is Deity the "Unconscious." The No-Thing is not "no-thing," the Non-conscious is not "unconscious," but both are attributes expressive of our ignorance, while asserting that That transcends all things and all consciousness.

We should do well in this connection to bear in mind the wise words of the *Zohar*, and apply the injunction contained therein to the words of the Hymn of the master of the Kabalah we have just cited, being well assured that he would have permitted none of his pupils to take the words of his instruction for the real mystery itself. For the *Zohar* says:

"Woe to the man who sees in the Torah (Law)* only simple recitals and ordinary words! . . . Each word of the Torah contains an elevated meaning and a sublime mystery.† The recitals of the Torah are the vestments of the Torah. Woe to him who takes this garment for the Torah itself!"‡

* That is, the Mosaic Books, the famous "Five Fifths."

† This is, of course, an exaggeration, the perversion of a truth.

‡ *Zohar*, iii., fol. 152*b*, as quoted by Myer, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

Or, again, as Origen, the most philosophical of all the Church Fathers, writes :

"Where can we find a mind so foolish as to suppose that God acted like a common husbandman, and planted a paradise in Eden, towards the East; and placed in it a tree of life visible and palpable, so that one tasting of the fruit by the bodily teeth obtained life? And, again, that one was a partaker of good and evil by masticating what was taken from the tree? And if God is said to walk in the paradise in the evening, and Adam to hide himself under a tree, I do not suppose that anyone doubts that these things figuratively indicate certain mysteries, the history having taken place in appearance, and not literally."*

But then Origen was once the disciple of the Platonist Pantænus, after the latter's return from India. Pantænus was also the teacher of Clement of Alexandria.

Yet one more citation from the *Zohar*, before we leave the Kabalah.

"The Ancient of the Ancients, the Unknown of the Unknown, has a Form, yet also has not any form. It has a Form through which the

* *De Principiis*, IV. i. 16; *A.-N.C.L.; The Writings of Origen* (Crombie's trans.), i. 315, 316.

universe is maintained. It also has not any form, as It cannot be comprehended." *

Passing from Chaldæa and Judæa to Egypt and its hoary wisdom, this is what Gaston Maspero, the veteran French Egyptologist, in his *Histoire d'Orient*, writes concerning the ideas of the Egyptians on the Soul of the World :

"In the beginning was the Noon, the Primordial Ocean, in the infinite Depths of which floated the germs of all things. From all Eternity God generated Himself and gave birth to Himself in the Bosom of this Liquid Mass, as yet without form and without use. This God of the Egyptians is One Being only, perfect, endowed with knowledge and unfallacious intelligence, incomprehensible in so far as no one can say in what He is comprehensible. He is the One Only One, He Who exists essentially, Who alone lives in Substance, the sole Generator in the Heaven and on the Earth Who is not generated, the Father of Fathers, the Mother of Mothers." †

The Supreme God of the Mysteries whom the

* *Zohar*, "Idra Zuta," iii. 288*a* ; Myer, *op. cit.*, p. 274.

† Quoted by E. Amélineau in his *Essai sur le Gnosticisme égyptien*, in the series of *Les Annales du Musée Guimet*, tom. xiv. 282.

Greeks named Ammōn, the Egyptians called Amen. As E. de Rougé says:*

"The name Amen means 'hidden,' 'enveloped,' and by extension 'mystery.' . . . This God then was called Amen because He represented all that was most secret in Divinity."

In a Hymn to Ammon Rā, speaking of the name Amen, it is said:

"Mysterious is His Name even more than His Births." †

And in the invocations, which M. Naville has collected under the title of *Litanie du Soleil,* the same God is called "Lord of the Hidden Spheres," the "Mysterious One," the "Hidden."

"Amen" thus seems to suggest the secret which will only be revealed when man has risen again into the Great Mother and can thus make the world around undergo "magical transformation," or the "turning of things inside out," so to say, whereby that which is secret becomes revealed in its pure nakedness; it is as it were the going back from form into the "womb of things," and so tracing consciousness back to the Father by means of the light-sparks hidden in every atom.

* *Mélanges d'Archéologie,* p. 72.

† Grébaut, *Hymne à Ammon Ra.*

"Mysterious is His Name even more than His Births." His Births are the things He brings forth by means of His Spouse or Syzygy, Will or Matter. His Name is the True Sound, which He utters forth from out of Himself, which causes Matter to bring forth or Himself to bring forth.

Here also is the place for a fine Hymn to the Sun, the masculine sign of the World-Soul, in which we can see, peeping through, the same mysticism as we find in both the initiatory Psalms of the Old Testament and certain concepts in the New. Thus it runs:

"The Princes of Heaven all daily behold the Glory of the King's Crown, upon the Head of Thee, the Mighty Prince, which is the Crown of Power, which is the Crown of the Endurance of Thy Government, an Image of Thy Might.

"Songs of Praise to the Creator of Egypt, and of the Shining Barque of the Lord. Make those to fear who hate Thee, make Thine enemies to blush, Lord and Prince of the very shining Star-house; Thou Who hast joined together Thy Plantation, Thou Who seest the Murderer of Thy Child of Man, the Righteous. Let me go to Thee; unite me with Thee; let me look upon Thy Sunlight, King of the Universe!

"Praise to Thy Face, Beaming Light in the Firmament, to Thee, to the Shining Lord of Heaven's Barque, to the Creator and Ruler Who renders Justice to all men, who delight to see Thee walking in the Web of Thy Splendour." *

This beautiful Hymn, like all inspired writing of this description, can be interpreted in many ways. It reminds me of much that I have pondered over in my Gnostic studies, and I will, therefore, hazard a suggestion which may be of interest to those who delight in similar paths of mysticism.

Heaven may be taken for the spiritual soul (Buddhi). The "Princes of Heaven" are the powers of this soul, and may be regarded as feminine, when contrasted with the Ātman or Spirit proper.

In this connection "daily" would connote any time-period, every breath of the Spirit, or Great Breath, in man.

They "behold the Glory"; that is, they come into contact with this Glory or Shekīnah or Presence; they are in definite relation with the Rays of the Spiritual Sun, in the state of active ecstasis.

The "Crown" thus denotes the state when

* From Uhlemann's *Book of the Dead*, as quoted in Dunlap's *Sōd: The Mysteries of Adoni*, p. 187.

the Power of Light or of the Spiritual Sun is not only potential within the brain and mind, but rays forth; when the man ceases to be only a personality, and begins to live, as it were, outside himself, as well as inside, when his powers begin to ray forth, out from personality.

The "Crown of Power" suggests the bringing of oneself into definite understanding relationship with other people; "Endurance" is stability, and "Government" is control over matter and others; while "Image" gives the idea of a raying-forth power which, like a stream of light-sparks, carries with it the full potencies of all its Father's Power.

"Image" seems to mean a reflection, or something thrown off from the Self, in a potential condition, not actual, but containing within itself the whole of its own creator. "Imagination" in this sense is not a faculty of the mind, but an ātmic spiritual power.

In other words, the Praisegiving suggests the state of a man when the powers of his spiritual soul come regularly into definite relationship with the Power that rays forth from the Mind of God. This is a Power which enables a man to bring himself into gnostic relationship with everyone. It is a continuous and stable control over substance, which is the other half of one's Self; and being an image of God's Strength or

Might, carries with it all the powers of God potentially.

The "Shining Barque of the Lord" may be taken as this spiritual soul again; and the "Shining Star-house" once more as the same mystery, the Buddhi, where the ātmic or spiritual stars hang themselves out in constellations and configurations, ordered as the stars of heaven are ordered.

The "Plantation" is perhaps again the self-same setting-in-order of the inner stellar world of man's own nature, or may be compared with the Paradise, in which the Trees of Life are synonyms of the stars.

The "Murderer of Thy Child of Man, the Righteous," reminds us of Typhon, the Slayer of Osiris, who is the Son of Man, the Justified, or Righteous.

Let us now turn to another Book of Wisdom, and hear what Hermes, the Thrice-greatest, has to tell us of the mystery. In the treatise called *Pœmandrēs*, the World-Mind (Paramātman), the "Mind of all Masterhood," mirrored in the higher mind of the initiate, speaks thus to his lower consciousness:

"Thou sayest well, O Thou, thus speaking. I, Mind, Myself, am present with holy men and good, the pure and merciful, men who live piously

"To such My Presence doth become an aid, and straightway they gain gnosis of all things, and win the Father's love by their pure lives, and give Him thanks, invoking on Him blessings, and chanting hymns, intent on Him with ardent love.

"And ere they give the body up unto its proper death, they turn them with disgust from its sensations, from knowledge of what things they operate.

"Nay, it is I, the Mind, that will not let the operations which befall the body work to their natural ends. For, being Doorkeeper, I close up all the entrances, and cut the mental actions off which base and evil energies induce."*

As it is impossible in the space at my disposal to attempt an analysis of all the passages cited, I can only suggest briefly a few hints. The Father is here, as in cognate schools of philosophical mysticism, what the Upaniṣhads of the Veda call Ātman in both cosmos and man. The "hymns" are the "music of the spheres" of man's inner nature, which sing in harmony only when man becomes one with the great Soul of Nature. The idea is well expressed by Dryden, who writes:

* *Corpus Hermeticum*, i. 22; see my *Thrice-greatest Hermes*, ii. 14.

From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began;
From harmony to harmony,
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in man.

All activity creates sound, and when a man really gets ātmic or spiritual consciousness, he hears, it is said, the atoms of his body singing together in a harmonious song of praise to himself, or his Self, who holds them together in this special relationship one to another, and causes them to be active unto sound.

The teaching, however, as to the disgust or loathing * of the senses is different from the wiser instruction of the Upaniṣhads, where we learn that both longing and detestation are equally bonds of attachment, and that pure freedom can never be won by either means.

Mark well also the curious expression that the Mind is the "Door-keeper," both the Great Mind and the mind of man; the one keeping the doors or gates of the great planes of the universe, the other guarding the portals of the little universe.

And here we may call to mind "H. P. B.'s" words:

"In that mansion called the human body the

* The original, *μυσάττεσθαι*, is a very strong word, meaning to abominate, detest, loath; used of filth and foulness.

brain is the front door, and the only one which opens out into [physical] space." *

Let us—as the preceding sentences naturally lead up to it—pause here a moment to learn the path of the soul upwards, when, in the case of the righteous, death overtakes the body, or when the man becomes "dead" to sin, and when the corruptible are put off for the incorruptible, according to the Trismegistic Gnōsis:

"Well hast thou taught me all, as I desired, O Mind; and now, pray, tell me further of the Way Above, as now it is for me.

"To this Man-Shepherd said: When thy material body is to be dissolved, first thou surrenderest the body by itself unto the work of change, and thus the form thou hadst doth vanish, and thou surrenderest thy way of life, void of its energy, unto the Daimōn. Thy body's senses next pass back into their sources, becoming separate, and resurrect as energies; and passion and desire withdraw unto that nature which is void of reason.

"And thus it is that man doth speed his way thereafter upwards through the Harmony.

"To the first zone he gives the Energy of

* *Lucifer*, vii. 182. The brain might rather be called the back door. The front door should perhaps be the whole body, for we have to use our whole body to live and be conscious in the cosmos or real space.

Growth and Waning; unto the second zone, Device of Evils, now de-energized; unto the third the Guile of the Desires de-energized; unto the fourth, his Domineering Arrogance, also de-energized; unto the fifth, unholy Daring and the Rashness of Audacity, de-energized; unto the sixth, Striving for Wealth by evil means, deprived of its aggrandisement; and to the seventh zone, Ensnaring Falsehood, de-energized.

"And then with all the energizings of the Harmony stript from him, clothed in his proper power, he cometh to that Nature which belongs unto the Eighth, and there, with those that are, hymneth the Father.

"They who are there welcome his coming there with joy; and he, made like to them who sojourn there, doth further hear the Powers who are above the Nature that belongs unto the Eighth, singing their songs of praise to God in language of their own.

"And then they, in a band, go to the Father home; of their own selves they make surrender of themselves to Powers, and thus becoming Powers they are in God.

"This the good end for those who have gained Gnosis—to be made one with God.

"Why shouldst thou then delay? Must it not be, since thou hast all received, that thou shouldst to the worthy point the way, in order

that through thee the race of mortal kind may by thy God be saved?" *

Much could be written on the ascent of this Scala Santa, the true spiritual Climax, but I have already treated the subject elsewhere, and would refer the interested reader to the note for the indications.

What, however, the idea of the Egyptian initiate was concerning this attainment, and how difficult it is to treat of such lofty themes without the greatest self-contradictions, we may learn from the following Hymn:

"Holy art Thou, O God, the Universals' Father.

"Holy art Thou, O God, Whose Will perfects itself by means of its own powers.

"Holy art Thou, O God, Who willest to be known and art known by Thine own.

"Holy art Thou, Who didst by Word make to consist all things that are.

"Holy art Thou, of Whom All-nature hath been made an Image.

"Holy art Thou, Whose Form Nature hath never made.

"Holy art Thou, more powerful than all Power.

"Holy art Thou, transcending all Pre-eminence.

* *Corpus Hermeticum*, i. 24–26; *op. cit.*, ii. 15–17, which see for notes and commentary; also see my *Hymns of Hermes*, pp. 21 ff., in the series "Echoes from the Gnosis."

"Holy art Thou, Thou better than all Praise.

"Accept my reason's offerings pure, from soul and heart for aye stretched up to Thee, O Thou unutterable, unspeakable, Whose Name naught but the Silence can express!" *

The inability of human words to express That which must ever transcend expression (for even the Universe itself, or even an infinite number of Universes is incapable of expressing It), and the inability of the human mind to comprehend the Divine Mind, are also admirably set forth in the following Hymn:

"*Who*, then, may sing Thee praise of Thee, or praise to Thee?

"*Whither*, again, am I to turn my eyes to sing Thy praise? Above, below, within, without?

"There is no way, no place is there about Thee, nor any other thing of things that are.

"All are *in* Thee, all are *from* Thee, O Thou Who givest all and takest naught, for Thou hast all and naught is there Thou hast not.

"And *when*, O Father, shall I hymn Thee? For none can seize Thy hour or time.

"*For what*, again, shall I sing hymn? For things that Thou hast made, or things Thou hast not? For things Thou hast made manifest, or things Thou hast concealed?

* *Corpus Hermeticum*, i. 31; *op. cit.*, ii. 19, 30, for notes and commentaries.

"*How*, further, shall I hymn Thee? As being of myself? As having something of mine own? As being other?

"For that Thou art whatever I may be; Thou art whatever I may do; Thou art whatever I may speak.

"For Thou art all, and there is nothing else which Thou art not." *

In all the great traditions of the Wisdom-Religion, in Egypt and Phœnicia, in Babylon and China, in India and Greece, the World-Soul is Intelligence, symbolized indifferently in personifications which are sexless, or male-female (androgyne), or, again, male or female, according to the mode of its operation. The Universal Mind of Pythagoras is a name of Deity universally recognized in antiquity. Athena is Wisdom, and Bacchus the Divine Mind, for the philosopher and initiate. Thus we have no difficulty in understanding why Pœmandres (lit., Man-shepherd) is Great Mind, Mind of all Masterhood.

Less easy is it to understand why there are seven spheres in the Harmony, except by analogy with sound and colour, and the septenary scheme of the chemical elements according to the periodic law. But whether we understand

* *Corpus Hermeticum*, v. (vi.), 10, 11; *op. cit.*, ii. 105; *Hymns of Hermes*, 44, 45.

or not the mystery of the "number of manifestation," we must all become musicians and learn to sing sweetly on Apollo's heptachord before we "can hear the Powers who are above the Eighth singing their songs of praise in language of their own."

This language is no speech of the "tongue of flesh," for there are celestial languages, tongues of gods, of angels and archangels, and daimones. There are certain "sweet voices," and voices from heaven, even as the Rabbis of Israel called the word of prophecy the Bath-kol (lit., Daughter of the Voice or Word) the Heavenly Voice; or as the *Acts of John* tell us in John's Vision of the Cross:

"And I saw the Lord Himself above the Cross, not having any shape but only a Voice; and a Voice not such as was familiar to us, but a sweet and kind Voice, and one truly of God." *

We must learn to play on the seven-stringed Lute of the radiant Sun-God, and modulate the harmonies of our own septenary nature, for:

> Seven sounding letters sing the praise of Me,
> The immortal God, the almighty Deity;
> Father of all, that cannot wearied be.
> I am the eternal Viol of all things,
> Whereby the melody so sweetly rings
> Of heavenly music. †

* See *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* (2nd ed.), p. 435.

† Oliver, *The Pythagorean Triangle*, p. 175.

Many are the mysteries involved in this idea, not the least of which is the mystery of the human body, the miniature cosmos. There are, it is said, seven "strings" in the physical body, one "chord" pinned out, so to say, in seven different directions, by seven *chakras* (wheels or centres), as Indian psycho-physiology calls them.

The practical mystic must find the chord, find the *chakras*, find the directions in space, and "name" them. From one point of view we may say that it is in the solar plexus that the chord is involved or rolled up; this is the centre in the body whence the personal chord passes forth to the mother-side of things, and makes the man to become impersonal. I am here speaking of the mystic and not of the psychic. The triplicity of substance (*guṇa* in Sanskrit means a "thread")—the modes that play through the one element or substance—binds us all in a mystic matter to our cosmic mother; this chord is attached to our buddhic swaddling clothes, so to say, and we hang like an atom in space.

We are cosmicly like children in a prenatal stage; we cannot use our cosmic mouth as yet and utter "words of power" or sing "sweet songs."

As the child, the Christ-child, grows, the chord becomes the seven strings of the *vīna* throughout the body, and these strings must

be played upon harmoniously. The strings are never out of tune; it is we who have to learn to play tunefully and harmoniously upon them. And then at last the three master *chakras* of the body will become attached to the three spiritual modes, the three modes of activity of power, instead of being attached, as at present, to our buddhic "swaddling clothes." Then at length will man become Man and stand upright, and free himself, and utter wisdom and power.

Passing next to schools of Gnosticism cognate with the Trismegistic tradition, let us take a thought or two that comes from the minds of the great masters of the Christianized Gnōsis.

Epiphanius professes to describe the ceremony whereby the Heracleonitæ prepared a dying brother for the next world. The words of power wherewith the soul might break the seals and burst open the gates of the Invisible in its passage to rest, are given as follows:

"I, the Son from the Father, the Father Pre-existing, but the Son in present existence, came to behold all things, things both other than my own and of my own, yet things not altogether other than my own, but of Achamōth, who is female, and made them for herself. But I derive my race from the Pre-existing, and I

am going back unto my own whence I have come." *

This is what the Hindūs call a *mantra*, a formula of power, to keep the mind in tune and stablish it upon the higher basis of its spiritual being. It is of special interest as giving us the spirit of the as yet almost untranslatable formulæ of the *Book of the Coming-forth unto Day*, commonly called the *Book of the Dead*.

It gives the reason of the descent, the coming-forth to know; the things of himself are the spiritual things-that-are; the things of Achamōth (a Hebrew name for Wisdom) are the things of matter, those things which Wisdom in her substance-nature brings forth of herself, without her Lord, the Mind; they are other than His, and yet not other, for she is His spouse.

Such a self-realized man, such a Man, is a Race and not an individual.

There were many such mystic formulæ containing hidden truths which true lovers of theosophy will instantly recognize; such as, for instance, the garnering of the harvest of life-experiences, by the greater mind, quoted by Epiphanius from the lost *Gospel of Philip*, which runs as follows:

* *Hær.*, xxxvi. 3. *Cf.* also Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.*, I. xxi. 5.

"I recognized myself, and gathered myself together from all sides; I sowed no children for the Ruler, but I tore up his roots, and gathered together my limbs which were scattered abroad; I know thee who thou art, for I am from the realms above."*

This is the apology or defence of the soul of the truly initiate as it passes through the realms of the Invisible, each of which is in charge of a ruler, the minister of the Ruler Death. As the Logos gathers together His children (the light-sparks, or *logoi*, or angels, or divine minds, of men), the Atoms of the Limbs of His Body, and takes them Home into His Bosom, so does the greater mind of a man collect its limbs in its turn and become Osirified.

"I recognized myself," or "I have known myself"; having lived many lives raying-forth, I have now become aware of myself, of my Self, and developed true Self-consciousness. The time has now come for returning again. I collect or gather together all my rayings-forth, collect myself from every atom of matter. For before the real withdrawing-time comes, it is said, the man has to ray forth into every atom by the power of great love and great sympathy; he must go everywhere before he can become cosmic.

* See *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* (2nd ed.), p. 600.

And so we may think of such an one as saying: I have given up sending forth my spiritual potencies or rays into external things; I have gathered myself unto myself, back again from atomic diversity into my true Self. I now become conscious of Thee, the World-Soul, for I am at-one with the One Above.

But let us take a passing glance at a few of these great Gnostic "heresies."

In the tradition of "Simon," the Soul of the World was symbolized as Fire, and spoken of as "He who stands, has stood, and will stand," as we learn from his *Great Announcement.*

Mænander, after him, and Satornīlus, the disciple of Mænander, named It the Unknown Father.

As we pass down the corridors of history we find Basilīdes, one of the most famous masters of the Gnōsis, re-naming this Un-nameable of many names, and calling It by the mysterious appellation Abraxas, perhaps a transliteration from some mystery-tongue. This was the Unborn Father, "He who is not."

This he did for the comprehension of the "many"; for the "few" he had a further teaching:

"There was when Naught was; nay, even that 'Naught' was not aught of things that are.

But nakedly, conjecture and mental quibbling apart, there was absolutely not even the One. And when I use the word 'was,' I do not mean to say that It *was*; but merely to give some suggestion of what I wish to indicate, I use the expression 'There was absolutely Naught.' For that 'Naught' is not simply the so-called Ineffable; it is beyond that. For that which is *really* Ineffable is not *named* Ineffable, but is superior to every name that is named."

Carpocrates, who follows next in date, like Satornīlus, speaks of the Unknown Father, the Ingenerable.*

Finally, the World-Soul or World-Mind of the Valentinian Gnōsis was called Bythos, the Depth, from which came all the Æons or Spiritual Eternities. This was not called the Father until the primal Syzygy or Double, Sigē (Silence), emanated in the All-Unity. This was perhaps in some way the Noon of the Egyptians, of whom it is said:

"Thou art the First-born of the Gods; Thou from Whom I came forth." And again: "Thou art the One creating Himself," as we read in the *Book of the Dead*.†

* Hippol., *Philos.*, viii. 4.

† For a work of introduction to the study of Christian Gnosticism, the reader may be referred to my *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*.

Among prayers to the Supreme Principle are specially to be remarked the mystic invocations in the Coptic Gnostic MSS., brought back from Upper Egypt, and preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and in the British Museum. These are largely Christian overworkings superimposed on a basis of Egyptian Gnosticism. In the concluding section appended to the *Pistis Sophia* document headed "Extract from the Books of the Saviour," the Saviour, the First Mystery, thus addresses the Hidden Father in the mystic celebration of an initiatory rite of which a dim memory remains in the Eucharist of the Churches. The Prayer is in the mystery-language, untranslatable by the "profane," and runs as follows:

"Hear Me, My Father, Father of all Fatherhood, Boundless Light:

"*Aeēiouō· iaō· aōï· ōïa· psinōther· thernōps· nōpsiter· zagourē· pagourē· nethmomaōth· nepsiomaōth· marachachtha· thōbarrabau· tharnachachan· zorokothora· ïeou· sabaōth.*" *

Even the casual reader will at once perceive the permutations of the three mother-voices out of the seven, and the reader of modern theosophical literature will recall the three-, five-,

* *Pistis Sophia* (Schwartze), p. 357; see my translation, p. 358, and Carl Schmidt's (*Koptisch-gnostische Schriften*), i. 232.

and seven-vowelled mystery-names of the "Stanzas of Dzyan" in *The Secret Doctrine.* Whether some practical mystic who is a scholar as well, following in the steps of Leemans, Wessely, Dieterich and Kenyon, will ever be able to recover the key to this and similar enigmas with which the Coptic Gnostic works and the Greek magical and theurgical papyri are studded, who shall say? From a note of a scribe, however, written at the end of Book I. of the *Pistis Sophia* document, we learn:

"This is the Name of the Deathless One: $\overline{\text{AAA}}\cdot\ \overline{\text{OOO}}$; and this is the Name of the Voice for the sake of Whom the Perfect Man has become active: $\overline{\text{III}}$." *

The thrice-holy Alpha and Ōmega is the Name of the Endless and Deathless One, for He is both End and Beginning simultaneously; while Iōta is the Creative Potency. The Deathless One is the Father of the Plērōma, or Fullness.†

Moreover, in the same document, on the page following the mystery-invocation we have quoted above, we read:

"And Jesus cried aloud, turning to the four corners of the world, together with His Disciples,

* *P.S.*, Schwartze, p. 125; Mead, p. 123; Schmidt, i. 81.

† *Cf.* E. Amélineau, *Notice sur le Papyrus gnostique Bruce*, p. 113.

all clad in linen garments, and said: *ïaō· ïaō· ïaō.*

"This is its interpretation: *Iōta,* because the All hath gone forth; *alpha,* because it will turn itself back again; *ōmega,* because the consummation of all consummations will take place."

No Kabalistic method for obtaining a numerical solution I have yet applied has produced any satisfactory result, except that the sum of the digits of the seven-vowelled name is seven, and the sum of the whole invocation is likewise seven. The work has all to be done; and though no one has yet solved the method of this deeply-concealed mysticism, we should bear in mind that no scholar has even attempted a solution other than the hopeless guesses of an inadequate philology, and a speculation by Harnack that we have here fragments of the "speaking with tongues" (glossalaly).

Let us next take the Gnostic teaching of Paul in his Letter to the Colossians (i. 12–19):

"Giving thanks to the Father who fits us for a share in the Inheritance of the Holy* in the Light; who preserved us from the Power of the Darkness, and translated us into the Kingship of the Son of His Love, in Whom we have

* Or the Saints.

our Redemption,* the Remission of Sins; Who is Image of God the Invisible,—the First-born of every creation.†

"For in Him are founded all things, in the Heavens and on Earth, visible and invisible, whether Thrones or Lordships, whether Beginnings‡ or Powers. All things were founded through Him and for Him. And He is before all, and in Him all things consist.

"And He Himself is the Head of the Body of the Assembly;§ He Who is the Beginning,‖ the First-born from the Dead;¶ that He might be in all Himself supreme. For it seemed good that all the Fullness** should dwell in Him."

The spirit and terminology of the whole passage is entirely Gnostic, and can only be understood by a student of Gnosticism. The essential identity of every Soul with the Over-Soul has been, is, and will be, a fundamental doctrine of the Gnōsis.

* The Textus Receptus adds "through his blood," but this is not in the best texts.

† Or foundation.

‡ *Archai*, or Rulerships, a hierarchy of Æons; the same term used in the opening words of the Fourth Gospel: "In the Beginning was the Word."

§ *Ekklesia*, one of the Æons.

‖ *Archē*, the Primæval Æon. ¶ The uninitiated.

** *Plērōma*, the totality of the Æons, the synthesis of their hierarchies. *Cf.* Epiphanius (*Hær.*, I. iii. 4), who remarks on the Valentinians quoting this text.

The glorified Master, the Christ, is the Man who, perfected by the sufferings and consequent experiences of many births, finally becomes at-one with the Father, the World-Soul, from Whom he came forth, and at last arises from the Dead and returns to Life and Light or full Self-consciousness.

He, indeed, is the First-born, the perfected, Self-conscious Mind, or Man, containing in himself the whole Divine Creation or Plērōma; for he is one with the hierarchies of Spiritual Beings who gave him birth, and instead of being the microcosm, the image of the Image as when among the Dead, has become the Macrocosm or the true Image of the World-Mind.

Through the power of this Spiritual Union, or Sacred Marriage, do we win Redemption from the bonds of self-will and thus attain the Remission of Sins, which, according to the wise among the Gnostics, was in the hand of the First and Last Mystery alone, our Highest Self, who is at the same time our Judge and Saviour, sending forth the Sons of His Love, all Rays of His Great Compassion, into the Darkness of Matter, that Matter may become self-conscious and so perfected. In plainer words, these Rays are each the higher self in every child of the Great Man, proceeding from their Divine Source (Mahā-buddhi or Great Buddhi), the Spouse of Deity,

that Ocean of Love and Compassion which is the Veil of the Innominable and Incognizable Self (Paramātman).

Or let us regard these pregnant words of Paul from the standpoint of the man who is winning towards Perfection and has almost achieved.

"Light" may then be said to be the state when such a man is not raying-forth; it is the opposite of "Darkness," which in this connection may be said to express the state when the man is throwing-forth into matter his own light, his own "attention." This is the state "as in a glass darkly"—the looking-glass state, when we see ourselves in any form and think it is our existence.

"Light," however, may be a state of supreme consciousness, or it may be a state in which a man is not *self*-conscious. Man has to be able to get outside a thing to know it and understand it; he has to have been outside—forth from the state of Light, before he becomes self-conscious in the Light.

The "Inheritance" may be said to be that which descends from Father to Son, by law, or something fixed; it is a cosmic law.

Mystically "fits us" may be thought of as clothing or outfitting us; and the share as one of activity, of life, or energy.

We are then "translated" into the result of

His Love; but this does not mean, I believe, that such a man is taken from where he is and goes on to infinitude, but that he begins to do both; he begins to take an active share in this law or inheritance of completeness or perfection, as soon as ever he can translate himself into the Love of his own Father, his Highest Self.

In such a one who is becoming perfect, the "Head" might signify the idea of truly "Personal"* consciousness and control; the "Body" substance; and the "Assembly" the Æon where everything separate is assembled together. It is where everything parted has assembly together; within the very substance of it the true consciousness of the "Person" begins to sprout. This true "Personal" contact may be said to be not with the "Assembly," but within the "Body" of the "Assembly"; this "Body" being the one element or quintessence.

The "First-born from the Dead" would thus in this connection denote the first sprouting of the true "Personal" or higher consciousness within the one-element side of what had hitherto been dead matter.

It must not, however, be supposed that such ideas were foreign to the greater minds of Greece and Rome. As has already been said, all that can be attempted in this study is to select a few

* That is, pertaining to the Person.

passages here and there. Pythagoras and Plato, and the Neoplatonic and Neopythagorean writers, can supply us with innumerable quotations; but as already much has been given from their works in other theosophical studies, we may here show that there are other less known philosophers in this connection who can yield us evidence. For instance, Xenophanes, the principal leader of the Eleatic sect,* describes God as incomprehensible.

"Incorporeal in substance, and figure globular;† and in no respect similar to man. That He is all sight and hearing, but does not breathe. That He is all things; Mind and Wisdom; not generate but eternal, impassible and immutable."‡

Lucian also makes Cato say:

"God makes Himself known to all the World; He fills up the whole Circle of the Universe, but makes His particular Abode in the Centre, which is the Soul of the Just." §

Nor were these philosophical concepts evolved by "civilization," for we find the same ideas again and again reiterated in the oldest "Orphic Fragments," which must be given an original

* Or school, or "heresy"; *e.g.*, αἵρεσις Ἑλληνική, "a study of Greek literature" (Polyb., xl. 6, 3).

† That is, perfect.

‡ Oliver, *The Pythagorean Triangle*, 49.

§ *Ibid.*, 51.

antiquity at least contemporaneous with the Trojan War period. Let us here attempt a translation of one of the Hymns based on this Orphic tradition.

"Zeus is the First. Zeus that rules the thunder is the Last. Zeus is the Beginning [lit., Head]. Zeus the Middle. From Zeus were all things made.

"Zeus is Male. Zeus, the imperishable, is Maid.

"Zeus is the Foundation of the Earth and starry Heaven. Zeus is the Breath [Air] of all. Zeus the Whirl of unwearied Fire. Zeus is the Root of the Sea [Water]. Zeus is Sun and Moon. Zeus is King. Zeus Himself the Supreme Parent of all.

"There is but One Power, One Daimōn, One Great Chief of all; One royal Frame in which all things revolve. Fire, and Water, and Earth, and Æther, Night and Day, and Mētis (Wisdom) the First Parent, and All-pleasing Erōs (Love). For all these are in the Great Body of Zeus.

"Wouldst thou see his Head and fair Faces? The Radiant Heaven, round which his Golden Locks of Gleaming Stars wave in the Space Above in all their Beauty. On either Side two Golden Taurine Horns, the Rising and the Setting of the Gods, the Paths of the Celestials.

His Eyes the Sun and the opposing Moon; His Mind that never lies, the imperishable kingly Æther." *

Let us next turn to the lore of our Scandinavian forefathers, to the prose *Edda*, which repeats a still more hoary tradition lost in the night of time. Thus it speaks of the World-Soul, of the Supreme Deity and the Primordial State of the Universe:

"Gangler thus began his discourse: 'Who is the first or oldest of the Gods?'

"'In our language,' replied Har, 'He is called Alfadir [All-Father, or the Father of All]; but in the old Asgard He had twelve names.'

"'Where is this God?' said Gangler. 'What is His power? and what hath He done to display His glory?'

"'He liveth,' replied Har, 'from all ages, He governeth all realms, and swayeth all things great and small.'

"'He hath formed,' added Jafnhar, 'Heaven and Earth, and Air, and all things thereto belonging.'

"'And what is more,' continued Thridi, 'He hath made man, and given him a soul which shall live and never perish, though the body

* From the text of Cory, as found in Aristotle, *De Mund.*; Eusebius, *Præp. Evan.*, III.; and Proclus, *Tim.*

shall have mouldered away or have been burne to ashes.'

. . . . . .

"'But with what did He begin, or what wa the beginning of things?' demanded Gangler.

"'Hear,' replied Har, 'what is said in th Völuspá*:

'Twas time's first dawn,
When naught yet was,
Nor sand nor sea,
Nor cooling wave;
Earth was not there,
Nor heaven above.
Naught save a void
And yawning Gulf."†

And now we have almost done with our serried ranks of witnesses; multitudes have not been called into court, but are waiting if need be to convince us that man is of a divine nature and not a congeries of molecules. Let us, therefore, conclude our case by citing from mystical Mohammedan Sufiism, which will tell us why Allah is supreme in the hearts of so many millions of our fellow-men.

The passionate longing for union with the

* The Völu- or Völo-spá, meaning "The Song of the Prophetess," is a kind of sibylline song containing the whole system of Scandinavian mythology.

† From I. A. Blackwell's translation, appended to Bishop Percy's translation of M. Mallet's *Northern Antiquities*, Bohn's edition, pp. 400, 401.

World-Soul, with the Source of our Being, is magnificently portrayed by the mystical Persian poets. Thus Jámí, in his *Yúsuf ú Zuleykhá*, sings:

Dismiss every vain fancy, and abandon every doubt;
Blend into One every spirit, and form and place;
See One—know One—speak of One—
Desire One—chant of One—and seek One. *

And again:

In solitude where Being signless dwelt
And all the universe still dormant lay,
Concealed in selflessness, One Being was,
Exempt from 'I'- or 'Thou'-ness, and apart
From all duality; Beauty Supreme,
Unmanifest, except unto Itself
By Its own light, yet fraught with power to charm
The souls of all; concealed in the Unseen,
An Essence pure, unstained by aught of ill. †

Perhaps some may be surprised that I have omitted from the numerous citations already adduced any reference to Buddhism. I have done so, not because the idea of the World-Soul is absent from that system, but because, for the most part, it is difficult to find therein anything in the nature of prayers or adoration to a Supreme Principle. The protest of Gautama against the externalization of the Divine was so strong, that his followers, as it seems to me, have in course

* *Religious Systems of the World*, Art. "Sikhism," p. 306.

† *Ibid.*, p. 328.

of time leaned to extremes, and preferred to express their aspirations rather in terms of denial of material qualities than in positive terms of definition of spiritual attributes. But what after all is Nirvāṇa but a synonym of at-onement with the World-Soul state in one of its degrees?* And this is indicated by the more transcendent term Parinirvāṇa, which provides for infinite transcendence in the state.

The word *nir-vāṇa* means literally "blown out," "extinguished," as of a fire; but it also means "tamed," as, for instance, *a-nirvāṇa*, used of an elephant not tamed, or one just caught or wild. There is no doubt whatever that the term describes a state in which the lower nature is entirely tamed, though it is to be regretted that a more positive teaching does not obtain in the so-called Southern Church of Buddhism. Its greatest metaphysicians, however, declare that the state of Nirvāṇa is of such a nature that no words can even hint at its reality, much less describe it, and that it is not wise to inculcate material ideas, however lofty, in the minds of the people. Therefore it is that in popular Buddhism we are met with such apparently self-contradictory statements as:

* *Cf. The Voice of the Silence* (1st ed.), p. 49: "Thou shall not separate thy being from BEING and the rest, *but merge the Ocean in the drop*, the drop within the Ocean."

"They who, by steadfast mind, have become exempt from evil desire, and well-trained in the teachings of Gautama; they, having obtained the fruit of the Fourth Path, and immersed themselves in that Ambrosia, have received without price, and are in the enjoyment of Nirvāṇa. Their old Karma is exhausted, no new Karma is being produced; their hearts are free from the longing after future life; the cause of their existence being destroyed, and no new yearnings springing up within them, they, the wise, are extinguished like this lamp." *

One naturally asks: If they are extinguished, how can they enjoy Nirvāṇa? But such contradictions are the lot of all popular presentations of the true mysteries of religion; in fact, it seems to be in the nature of things that Truth can only be stated in a paradox. Nothing but a study of esotericism will reconcile the exoteric systems with each other and with themselves. Nor will anything else persuade an orthodox Buddhist that there is salvation without the Piṭaka of Gautama, or a Brāhmaṇ without the Vedas, or a Christian without the Bible. How

* *Ratana Sutta*, 7, 14. That is to say, mystically, we exist as a flame at night; when the sun shines we may just as well be blown out; it makes no difference. You are not any use even to yourself, for you can see by means of the sun.

different is the spirit that animates some among the mystics, who consider it a sin, not only to say, but even to think, that their outer religion is superior to that of any other man!

Among all this over-cautious negation, therefore, I would suggest that the Nirvāṇic state contacts the "planes" of consciousness of the World-Soul proper. Of course this is not orthodox Buddhism, either of the Northern or Southern Church, as known to us; but it enables us to reconcile Buddhism with the other traditions, and also to see how the mystic interpretation is the connecting link between all of them, and completes their insufficiencies.

The "great heresy" of the "pilgrim soul," we are told, is the feeling of "separateness." With men, divided sense, and especially the "brain-mind," is that which keeps us from ourselves, for it produces the illusion of an *external* universe, whereas it is the "heart" that binds us to our fellows, and that alone can make us one with all men and with all nature.

Though I do not wish to fall into the error of transferring our present conditions to that of the World-Soul, and thus become guilty of materializing and anthropomorphizing that which transcends our highest consciousness as men, still I think that the suggestion of an analogy may not be harmful. As in man the "head"

externalizes and separates, and the "heart" binds and looks within, so, I would imagine, there may be some parallel here with what we may term an external state of the World-Soul, and an internal consciousness.

Thus we find a "head-doctrine" and a "heart-doctrine" * in every religion. "Nirvāṇa" can be reached by two Paths. By one an inner external state of consciousness of sublime bliss can be arrived at, by the other a union with "all that lives and breathes." This "external" state is doubtless deeply internal and highly subjective to our present senses; but it differs from that full reality of the "heart" that beats in compassion with all "hearts," just as the gratification of the senses and intellect differs from the calm of a noble soul conscious of striving for truth and purity in the midst of the most unfavourable surroundings.

Nor is the intuition of the "heart-doctrine" absent from any of the best religionists of to-day. The most advanced thinkers of Christendom

* I would suggest to students of the mystical treatise called "The Two Paths" one of the three "Fragments from the Book of the Golden Precepts," in the little book known as *The Voice of the Silence*, that the "eye-doctrine" may also be regarded as the higher mental view, when one must be above and beyond the object in order to be able to view it without prejudice, and the "heart-doctrine" be taken for the method whereby, so to speak, one enters the object and becomes it in order to understand its hidden secrets.

reject the idea of an eternal joy in Heaven, spent in vain adoration and inactive bliss. With true intuition they conceive that the joy of Heaven would be incomplete so long as others suffer. The grim Calvinism of a Tertullian who counted it one of the joys of his Heaven to look down upon the tortures of the damned in Hell, finds approbation only among the very ignorant. The larger minds of the Church will have none of it, just as some Buddhists count the Pratyeka Buddha, he who obtains the Nirvāṇa of the "eye," a symbol of spiritual selfishness. For like as the "spooks" in a *séance*-room rejoice to masquerade as great characters, and call themselves Homer, and Dante, and Jesus, so do many love to call themselves Christians and Buddhists, whereas they have as little claim to the title as have the irresponsible "spooks" to greatness.

To me, then, the attainment of Nirvāṇa, or the "Peace of God," or Mokṣha (Liberation), or by whatever name you choose to call it, is the attainment of a degree of consciousness of the World-Soul. For though I have in this connection spoken of Heaven in making a comparison, Heaven is rather to be connoted with Svarga or Dve-chan (Sukāvatī), or whatever name is given to the state of bliss between two earth-lives. But this is not *becoming* the World-Soul, or even a Great Soul, any more than the

possession of a human body constitutes an entity a *man.*

To become the World-Soul, the Nirvāṇa of the "eye" must be renounced, just as the world of external sensation must be renounced, to become one with the Higher Self, who commands:

"Leave all that thou hast, and follow *Me,*" in that "ye brought nothing into the world, neither shall ye take anything out."

Nirvāṇa, in this sense, must be renounced; for until every Soul of man has attained Nirvāṇa, the World-Soul is not as He IS;* and he who would be one with Him must take up the burden of a like responsibility. Just as the adept purifies the atoms of his body from the taint of passion in order to reach the Knowledge of the Self or Gnōsis, so must the Nirmāṇakāya aid in purifying the souls of men, whose purification will enable the World-Soul to be in, perchance, a more glorious state of activity. For though we make these distinctions in order to give some faint idea of the Mystery, still all is the Self sacrificing Itself to Itself, and selfishness and selflessness are words that lose their meanings in an intuition that escapes all words.

* *Cf.* "For so long as thou callest not thyself Mine, I am not what I AM." See *The Acts of John,* in *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* (2nd ed.), p. 437.

But to return to popular Buddhism. Though there is little evidence of any cult of a Supreme Principle, in the ordinary sense of the word, in the Southern Church, in the Northern Church it is different. The cult of one or other of the Supreme Buddhas is extensively practised; and we find prayers addressed to Mañjushrī, the personification of Wisdom, and to Avalokiteshvara, the "merciful Protector and Preserver of the world and of men," who are invoked and prayed to as, for example, by Fa Hian,* just as Shiva or Viṣhṇu is worshipped by orthodox Hindūs.

How the inner interpretation throws light on the outer forms, many know from a study of modern theosophical literature. The World-Soul, Ādi-Buddha, who emanates the five or seven Dhyāni-Buddhas, shows the identity of conception with the other great traditions.

Perhaps it may have caused surprise that the Upaniṣhads have not been cited; but that has not been for lack of passages, for the single object of these mystical scriptures is to inculcate the doctrine of the essential identity of man with God.

This, indeed, is the key-note of the Āryan religion, and every Upaniṣhad persistently reiterates it. As "H. P. B.," but for whom these

* *Buddhism*, by T. W. Rhys Davids, p. 203.

studies would not have originally been undertaken, says in that great store-house of instruction and information, *The Secret Doctrine* (i. 351):

"Not till the Unit is merged in the All, whether on this or any other plane, and Subject and Object alike vanish in the absolute negation of the Nirvāṇic State (negation, only from *our* plane), not until then is scaled that Peak of Omniscience—the Knowledge of things-in-themselves; and the Solution of the yet more awful Riddle approached, before which even the highest Dhyān Chohān must bow in silence and ignorance—the unspeakable Mystery of That which is called by the Vedāntins, Parabrahman."

Of course this may be denied by the theist; but let us remember that definition, even of the most metaphysical character, will land the definer in the most preposterous contradictions.

The reader may also object: What does Madame Blavatsky know of the highest Dhyān Chohān (Spiritual Being)?

To which, if I may venture to say so, her reply would be, as it has been to many another question: "Thus have I heard."

In other words, the teaching is that of those from whom "H. P. B." had received instruction,

or help in her writings, and it agrees with the general traditions of such things.

The explanations contained in *The Secret Doctrine* were never meant to rest on mere assertion; and the statement above quoted finds its support in all the great world-religions, as may be amply seen even from the few quotations adduced in this study.

I have also not given any selections from the heterogeneous books of the collection called the Old Testament or Covenant, for they must be already familiar to most of my readers, but have preferred citations from the Kabalah. Perhaps some may be surprised that I have also refrained from giving the prayer of Christendom from the New Testament, known as the "Lord's Prayer." This, however, was not a Christian prayer originally, but a Jewish one, and even James, the "Brother of the Lord," gives a teaching directly opposed to one of its principal clauses. This prayer is found almost *verbatim* in the Jewish Kadish, and runs as follows:

"Our Father, which art in Heaven, be gracious to us, O Lord our God; hallowed be Thy Name; and let the remembrance of Thee be glorified in Heaven above, and upon Earth here below.

"Let thy Kingship reign over us, now and for ever.

"Thy holy men of old said: 'Remit and forgive unto all men whatsoever they have done against me.'

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil thing.

"For Thine is the Kingdom, and Thou shalt reign in Glory, for ever and for ever more." *

Moreover, if "James" is any authority, we find ourselves placed on the horns of a theological dilemma, for he says:

"Let no one, when he is tempted, say 'I am tempted of the Deity': for the Deity cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man." †

This teaching is more in harmony with the direction:

"Enter into *thy* closet, and when thou hast shut *thy* door pray to *thy Father in secret.*" ‡ This does not mean that being in a physical closet the prayer is thus "in secret," but that this prayer, or contemplation, is to be made to, or on, the "Father in secret," within the

* Gerald Massey, *The Natural Genesis*, ii. 469. Version from *A Critical Examination of the Gospel History*, p. 109. *Cf.* Basnage, *Hist. des Juifs*, p. 374.

† Jas. i. 13. The words used for tempted, etc., are all from the verb πειράζομαι, and are identical with the word used in the prayer as found in the texts of Matthew (vi. 13) and Luke (xi. 4), viz., πειρασμός.

‡ Matt. vi. 6, τῷ πατρί σοῦ τῷ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ.

"chamber of the heart," as the Greek text proves beyond any question.*

In closing, let me again say I think that both the believers in a Personal God and those who refuse to give any attribute to Deity may find some common ground of agreement in the concepts of the World-Soul which have been set forth above.

Of course, it is only to the truly broad-minded that any appeal is made. In our days unorthodoxy, in its traditional sense, is no longer a term of reproach; reproach is now securely saddled on the back of orthodoxy. And for this desirable state of affairs we owe many thanks to fearless freedom of thought, to the unwinking scrutiny of scientific observation, and the logic of scientific methods.

But the pendulum begins to swing to the extreme, and it is time to guard against freedom developing into license, and the newly-fashioned idols of "orthodox" science being substituted for the crumbling idols of "orthodox" religion.

Religious thinkers are beginning to broaden in every direction, and though Churchmen still hold persistently to the term Personal God, they will, under pressure, so sublimate the concept that it is easy to perceive that the words

* *Cf. Thrice-greatest Hermes*, i. 209; and *Fragments* (2nd ed.), p. 70.

have no longer for them their traditional meaning, and that for some reason best known to themselves, or for some undefined fear, or blind conservative instinct, they prefer to cling to names instead of to Names or Powers.

The theist contends that men must have something to lean on, and that to take away the Personality of Deity would be to destroy the hope of the Christian world. But why so? Is there not a Christ in every man to lean upon? Nay, is not the Christ the very Man himself, if he would but know *Himself*? What more is requisite?

But the "orthodox" world has so long been reciting invocations to Jehovah that they have forgotten the teachings of their Founder who spoke of the "Father in secret" — no new teaching, as our quotations amply prove, but a repetition of the old, old mystery.

But the more spiritually-minded Christians are ashamed of the crude recitals concerning Jehovah, and do not care to have his exploits referred to. They try to explain it by apologetically postulating a partial revelation to the Jews, preluding a full revelation to themselves.

If, however, reference be made to the injustice of leaving other world-religions out in the cold, it is usually met with freezing silence, and the subject is hastily changed; or there will be talk

of monotheism and polytheism, and the question be begged by assuming that Judaism, in its orthodox tradition, is the highest expression of monotheism, whereas its spirit is rather that of monolatry or enolatry, if we care to amuse ourselves with word-coining.

But, for my part, I find the reconciliation of pantheism and monotheism, of God beyond Being, and God the Logos, in the great saying "All and One," which was first handed on to Greece by Heracleitus, and constituted the most sacred formula of the Trismegistic Gnōsis descended from the Wisdom of Egypt. This master-idea has been called panentheism; but by whatever name we call it, it is sublime, and to me seems inevitable.

There may be some who, after reading these studies, will accuse the writer of unfriendly feelings towards the Faith of the Western world, and spread the rumour that theosophy is anti-Christian. This it is not; but it does accomplish a metamorphosis. It takes us up to such heights that the lesser conceptions of popular theology fall away unregretted and almost unnoticed.

And this it accomplishes for all of any religion who come within its potent influence. Theosophy purifies and rarefies the dogmas and superstitions in Brāhmaṇism as well, in Buddhism, in Taoism

and Zoroastrianism, in Islām, and in Jewry. To the bigot of any of these faiths it appears anti-Brāhmaṇical, anti-Buddhistic, and so forth. But every true theosophist knows well the impossibility of being an enemy of any religion, seeing that he has a surer faith in the realities of religion than even the blindest believer in the separative creed of his fathers.

May the day soon dawn when the unchanging ideals, the vivifying ideas, and fruitful concepts of that universal Theosophy or Wisdom who is the Mother of all religions, shall come to light in the greater consciousness of Humanity, and all men, without distinction of race, caste, creed, or sex, recognise a common possession in them, and a common kinship with our Common Mother and God's Eternal Love.

Vāsāṅsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya
Navāni gṛihṇāti naro'parāṇi
Tathā sharīrāṇi vihāya jīrṇāny
Anyāni saṅyāti navāni dehī.

As a man casting off worn-out garments takes other new ones, so the lord of the body casting off worn-out bodies enters other new ones.

BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ, ii. 22.

THE SOUL-VESTURES

HANDBOOKS and pamphlets on theosophy—as outlined in the scheme that has been so prominently brought forward for the last thirty-one years during which the Theosophical Society has had its existence—are to-day so numerous, that almost all my readers must be aware of what have been called the "principles" of man. According to this scheme, man is regarded from seven points of view, although in reality he is ever one entity. This septenary classification enables the beginner to get a clearer idea of the complex nature of the vehicles, vestures, garments, or sheaths in which the divine consciousness manifests itself in the case of the human being. For as in all sciences, so in the greatest science of all — that of the human soul — we must resort to analysis, if we would have a clear conception of the problem before us.

There are, however, many systems, all of which divide the nature of man, according to

certain numberings or categories. In the present essay I shall, therefore, not insist on any precise division, but shall endeavour to give some general idea of what several of these soul-vestures may be. And by Soul I here mean the Divine consciousness in man—which is spoken of sometimes as the Self (Ātman)—and not the restricted idea that is more generally connoted with the term in the Western world. Of this Self the *Bhagavad Gītā* speaks as follows (ii. 20):

"He is not born, nor dies He ever; nor having once been will He not be again. Unborn, eternal, everlasting, ancient, He is not slain when the body is slain."

Ay, no matter how sublime and god-like the "body"* or vesture may be—for even that Garment of God by which men behold Him, as Goethe says—the whole conceivable universe, woven in the loom of time—even this will perish in the eternities. But the Self is (ii. 24, 25):

"Eternal, all-pervading, stable, immovable, ancient, He is called the unmanifestable, unthinkable He, unchangeable He."

Therefore, as Kṛishṇa says:

"Knowing Him to be such, thou shouldst not grieve."

* Not form.

Yes, the Soul has many a garment besides the "coats of skin" that covered the psychic nakedness of our primeval selves, in the first childhood of our present humanity. It was reserved for the gross literalism of mediævalism and of Protestant bibliolatry to clothe the naked physical bodies of a pictorial Adam and Eve with the skins of wild beasts, stitched together by the "Lord God" himself. It is high time to end the farce, and once more enter the sanctuary where memory is still retained of the under-meaning of this grand soul-myth.

Let us, then, first trace the descent of the Soul, or Self, as it involves downwards, clothing itself in certain main vestures and other minor ones, according to the teaching of the Vedāntic philosophers and the seers of ancient India. In that fascinating mystic treatise called *The Dream of Rāvan*,* the "Four States and Tabernacles of Man" are described as follows:

"There are Four Spheres of existence, one enfolding the other: †

"(1) The Inmost Sphere of Turīya,‡ in which

* Published originally in *The Dublin University Magazine*, in 1853 and 1854; and republished in book-form by the Theosophical Publishing Society in 1895.

† That is to say, interpenetrating each other, not like the skins of the onion.

‡ Lit., the Fourth.

the individualized Spirit* lives the ecstatic life.†

"(2) The Sphere of Transition, or Lēthē,‡ in which the Spirit, plunged in the ocean of Ajñāna§ or total unconsciousness,‖ and utterly forgetting its real Self,¶ undergoes a change, of gnostic tendency [polarity?];** and from not knowing at all, or absolute unconsciousness, emerges on the hither side of that Lethean Boundary to a false or reversed knowledge of things (Viparīta Jñāna), under the influence of an illusive Prajñā, or belief in, and tendency to, knowledge *outward* from itself; in which delusion it thoroughly believes, and now endeavours to realize it. Whereas the true knowledge which it had in the state of Turīya, or the ecstatic life, was all *within* itself, in which it intuitively knew and experienced all things.

"(3) And from the Sphere of Prajñā, or Out-knowing—this struggle to reach and recover *outside* itself all that it once possessed *within* itself, and lost—to regain for the lost intuition an objective perception through the senses and

* Or Soul, Ātman.

† On its own plane of true spiritual consciousness.

‡ Forgetfulness. § Lit., Non-wisdom, or Agnoia.

‖ As we know consciousness.

¶ Because of this vesture of Ajñāna, which is also Bliss.

** That is to say, of *recovering* its primal wisdom or Jñāna, or Gñāna, which is the same word as Gnōsis.

understanding—in which the Spirit became an intelligence—it merges into the third or Sphere of Dreams, where it believes in a universe of light and shade, and where all existence is in the way of Ā-bhāsa, or phantasm.*

"There it imagines itself into the Liṅga Deha (Psychē), or subtle, semi-material, ethereal soul, composed of a vibrating or knowing pentad, and a breathing or undulating † pentad.

"The vibrating or knowing pentad consists of (*a*) simple consciousness radiating into four different forms of knowledge: (*b*) the egoity or consciousness of self; (*c*) the ever-changing, devising, wishing mind, imagination or fancy; (*d*) the thinking, reflecting, remembering faculty; and (*e*) the apprehending and determining understanding or judgment.‡

"The breathing or undulating pentad contains the five vital auræ—namely, the breath of life, and the four nervous æthers that produce sensation, motion, and the other vital phenomena.§

"(4) From this subtle personification and

* Or appearance, reflected image, shade.

† Vibrating suggests straight, and undulating curved.

‡ This is the "Lower" Mind or the Antaḥkaraṇa or Inner Organ of the Vedāntins, consisting of (*a*) Ulla, instinctual mind (seldom found in any of the categories), and of (*b*) Ahaṅkāra, (*c*) Chittam, (*d*) Manas, (*e*) Buddhi.

§ The five Prāṇa's or magnetic vital currents, namely, vitalizing, expelling, equilibrating (or holding together), distributing and projecting.

Phantasmal Sphere, in due time it progresses into the fourth or Outmost Sphere, where matter and sense are triumphant; where the universe is believed a solid reality; where all things exist in the mode of Ā-kāra,* substantial form; and where that—which successively forgot itself from Spirit into absolute unconsciousness, and awoke on this side of that Boundary of Oblivion into an intelligence struggling outward, and from this outward struggling intelligence imagined itself into a conscious, feeling, breathing, nervous soul, prepared for further clothing—[where that which does all this] now out-realizes itself from soul into a body, with five senses,† or organs of perception, and five organs of action, to suit it for knowing and acting in the external world, which it once held within, but has now wrought out of itself.‡

* From *ā-kṛi*, to bring towards or down, to make or form wholly.

† These are inner.

‡ The five outer organs of sensation are the skin, eyes, nose, ears, tongue; corresponding to the simple consciousness and the four different forms of knowledge of the vibrating or knowing pentad. The five organs of action are the mouth, hands, feet, and the two lower orifices—the organs of speech, prehension, locomotion, excretion and procreation; corresponding to the breath of life and the four nervous æthers, which are the five vital auræ of the breathing or undulating pentad. For a full table of the Vedāntic Liṅga Sharīra, see note to the second of my articles on "Theosophy or Psychological Religion," in *Lucifer* (June, 1893), xii. 307.

"(1) The first or spiritual state was Ecstasy; (2) from Ecstasy it forgot itself into Deep Sleep; (3) from Profound Sleep it awoke out of unconsciousness, but still within itself, into the internal World of Dreams; (4) from Dreaming it passed finally into the thoroughly Waking State, and the outer World of Sense.* Each state has an embodiment of ideas or language of its own.

"The universal, eternal, ever-present intuitions that be eternally with the Spirit in the first (1), are in the second utterly forgotten for a time; and then (2) emerge reversed, limited, and translated into divided successive intellections, or gropings, rather, of a struggling and as yet unorganized intelligence, having reference to place and time, and an external historical world, which it seeks but cannot all at once realize outside itself.

"In the third (3) they become pictured by a creative fantasy into phantasms of persons, things and events, in a world of light and shade within us, which is visible even when the eyes are sealed in dreaming slumber, and is a prophecy and forecast shadow of the solid world that is coming.

"In the fourth (4) the out-forming or objectivity

* These states are called respectively: (1) Turīya, (2) Suṣhupti, (3) Svapna, (4) Jagrat.

is complete. They are embodied by the senses into hard external realities in a world without us.

"That Ancient Seer (Kavi Purāṇa),* which the *Gītā* and *Mahābhārata* mention as abiding in the breast of each, is first (1) a prophet and poet; then (2) he falls asleep and awakes as a blindfold logician and historian, without materials for reasoning, or a world for events, but groping towards them; next (3) a painter with an ear for inward phantasmal music, too; at last (4) a sculptor carving out hard palpable solidities."

I have ventured on this lengthy quotation because it is one of the plainest statements I have yet found of the famous but difficult system of Vedāntic psychology. It has to be carefully thought out to be fully appreciated, but will well repay the trouble by bringing to light many fresh beauties which a cursory first reading will necessarily slur over.

It is a most beautiful idea, that of the self-same Self being successively clothed in vestures which transform it first into a poet and prophet, in a state out of time and space; then a blind-fold logician and historian, in time and space, in a sort of internal-external historical world, with which it is not yet in touch, and where its operations are compared to divided successive

* The Ātman or Self.

intellections or gropings; next a painter and musician limning images on the phantasmal surface of things, and with an ear for inward harmony; and lastly a sculptor, carving out objects in three-dimensional space.

As may be seen from the above, the four, or rather three, states—for it would be wrong to term the highest a state, in that it represents the Self in its own essence—correspond to the three chief Vestures of the Soul, and we are told that an adept can separate these vehicles one from another, and energize in whichsoever he will.

These Vestures are again paralleled by several Garments, which are generally spoken of as Sheaths (Koshas).*

Starting from "below," we have first the Food Sheath, formed from food by the alchemy of nature. This is transformed by the vital auræ into protoplasm, and retransformed into blood, flesh, bone, muscle, skin, etc., eventuating finally into our physical body—truly graphically de-

* I would here suggest that a more accurate use of language might be made by retaining the term Sheath for the Way of Descent into Genesis or the Ocean of Becoming, the Saṁsāra of the Brāhmaṇs and Buddhists; and Vesture for the energized and vitalized Robes of Glory put on by the truly Regenerate or Free-born in the Path of Ascent, the Way Above. In the Descent the Self is veiled and limited, in the Ascent the Veils become Robes of Power and Glory.

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scribed as a "coat of skin." This is called the Food Garment or Sheath (Anna-maya Kosha).*

Next we have the fivefold Garment of the Life-breath, the Undulating Pentad, for it energizes in long rhythmic waves. This is called the Life Sheath (Prāṇa-maya Kosha).

Following this comes the Garment of the Vibrating Pentad, whose wave-lengths are straight and more rapid, for thought is more rapid than even the life-forces in the body. This latter Garment is twofold: one Sheath being connected with the faculty which refers all things to what we call "ourselves"—our illusive personalities — with the ever-changing, devising, wishing mind, imagination, or fancy, and the thinking, expecting, remembering faculty; the other with determination, understanding and judgment.

No doubt a clearer definition could be made, but the traditional method of the Vedāntic schools has based its classification on the five developed senses corresponding with the five elements, and ignores the septenary division.

* I should, however, like to be informed why the modern Vedāntic classification omits the Anna-*rasa*-maya Kosha, which in the second Anuvāka of *Taittirīyopaniṣhad* is given as entirely distinct from either the Anna-maya or Prāṇa-maya Kosha. The Sheath composed of the essence (*rasa*) of food should correspond with the Etheric Double of modern Theosophical nomenclature.

These two Garments are called the Mind and Knowledge * Sheaths (Mano-maya and Vi-jñāna-maya Koshas). And finally we have that Lethean Garment which, though it may prevent us from knowing our true Selves as long as we identify ourselves with our temporary Garments, is nevertheless a blessed Vesture of Forgetfulness of the misery and shame of our past lives, when we once more don it and enter into the much-needed rest from our labours. This has accordingly been appropriately termed the Garment of Bliss (Ānanda-maya Kosha).

All our misery consists in our imagining ourselves apart from the Self. And to destroy this misery we must begin by freeing ourselves from the illusion of mistaking these various Garments for our real Self.

This illusion, when induced by identification with the Food Garment, is stated in such false ideas as: † I am a male; I am a female; I am born; I live; I grow; I change; I decay; I shall hereafter die; I am a child, a youth, an old man; I am a priest, a physican, a tradesman; a total abstainer, a drunkard.

Again, the illusion of identifying oneself with

* Or perhaps we might call them Sheaths of the Intelligence and Understanding.

† I have adapted the following from the translation of the "Meditations of Vāsudeva"—*Lucifer* (September, 1892), pp. 24 ff., since published in book-form.

the Life Garment is revealed by such thoughts as: I am hungry; I am thirsty; I am strong; I am brave; I am the talker, the walker, the giver; I am dumb, I am lame.

So again with the Mind Garment, by such conceptions as: I am one that thinks, or fancies, or grieves, or am deluded; I am the hearer, toucher, the taster and he who smells; I am deaf, or blind.

And then with the Garment of Knowledge or Discrimination, by such thoughts as: I am intelligent; I am going to heaven; I am a learned person; I am indifferent to sensual pleasures.

And so finally with the Garment of Bliss, by thinking: I am happy; I am content; I am ignorant or vicious; I am wise; I am foolish.

The last example must be taken as the reflection of the characteristics of this Garment in the embodied state. When freed from the body, this Garment is freed from the idea of what we call the "I."

These very same ideas, though with a different nomenclature, are to be found in the books of wisdom of ancient Egypt as philosophized by the Greeks.

In one of the sacred sermons of the Trismegistic tradition called "The Key" we read:

"Now the principles of man are this wise vehicled: Mind in the Reason, the Reason in the

Soul, Soul in the Spirit, and Spirit in the Body." *

That is to say, the Soul, or the Self, is clothed: first with the Blissful Garment of the One Element, in which Mind (Ātman) is first embryonic and as a child within the womb; then with the Knowing Garment of Reason; then with the Garment of Fancy and the rest, called by Hermes the Soul; next with the Garment of Life or Spirit; and last of all by the Gross Body.

These natures are, so to speak, involved one in another, and are within one another only in the sense of being respectively more intimate to the true nature of man. The Trismegistic category runs:

Mind (νοῦς); Reason (λόγος); Soul (ψυχή); Spirit (πνεῦμα); Body (σῶμα).

The remarkable similarity of this category with the psychology of the Upaniṣhads cannot fail to strike the student of these mother-treatises of Vaidik theosophy. Thus we read in the Kaṭhopaniṣhad (I. iii. 10, 11):

"Beyond the Senses † are the Rudiments; ‡ beyond the Rudiments, Impulsive Mind; beyond

* *Corpus Hermeticum*, x. (xi.) 13; see my translation, *op. supra cit.*, ii. 149.

† *Sc.*, the means of contact with the physical world, or world of the gross elements.

‡ That is, the subtle elements.

the Mind, the Reason; beyond the Reason, the Great Self.

"Beyond the Great, the Increate;* beyond the Increate, the Man;† beyond the Man, not anything: that is the Goal; that is the final End."

The analogy is striking. Body = gross elements; spirit = subtle elements; soul = impulsive mind (*manas*); reason (*logos*) = reason (*buddhi*); Mind = the Great (*Mahat*), that is, Ātmic Mind; Source (*Archē*)‡ = the Increate (the Mother Substance); the One and Only One (*τὸ ἕν καὶ μόνον*) = the Man (or Supreme Ātman or Self).

The ideas are clear enough, though the use of the indefinite terms Mind, Soul, and Spirit are confusing. The Mind (Nous) of the Hermes-mystics is the Ātman of the Upaniṣhads. Their Spirit is the Vedāntic Prāṇa.§ Thus in "The Perfect Sermon" of the Trismegistic school we read:

"Twain are the forms of food—for soul and body, of which all animals consist. Their soul

* Undifferentiated cosmic substance, Avyakta (Mahā-buddhi).

† Puruṣha, the True Man, the Highest Self, Paramātman.

‡ For in § 14 Hermes says: "Now from one Source all things depend; while Source dependeth from the One and Only One."

§ These terms are used in both traditions in both a cosmic and individual sense.

is nourished by the ever restless motion of the World (Cosmos); their bodies have their growth from foods drawn from the water and the earth of the inferior world.

"Spirit, with which they all are filled, being interblended with the rest,* doth make them live; sense being added, and also reason in the case of man — which hath been given to man alone, as a fifth part out of the æther." †

Or to continue with our quotation from "The Key":

"Spirit pervading body by means of veins and arteries and blood, bestows upon the living creature motion, and, as it were, doth bear it in a way.

"For this cause some do think that the soul is blood, in that they do mistake its nature, not knowing that at death it is the spirit that must first withdraw into the soul, whereon the blood congeals and veins and arteries are emptied, and then the living creature is withdrawn; and this is body's death."

And later on (§ 16) we read, concerning the change that takes place at death:

"For when the soul withdraws into itself, the spirit doth contract itself within the blood, and

* *Sc.*, of the elements.

† *P.S.*, vi. 3; *op. cit.*, ii. 317, 318.

soul within the spirit. And then the mind, stript of its wrappings, and naturally divine, taketh unto itself a fiery body,* doth traverse every space, after abandoning the soul unto its judgment and whatsoever chastisement it hath deserved."

This refers to the after-death condition of the cast-off lower Garments which endure for a time in a state which the Buddhists call Kāma Loka or the Place of Desire. Further on again Hermes speaks more distinctly of these Garments when he says (§§ 17 ff.):

"It is, son, in a body made of earth that this arrangement of the vestures comes to pass. For in a body made of earth it is impossible the mind should take its seat itself by its own self in nakedness.

"For neither is it possible on the one hand the earthly body should contain such immortality, nor on the other that so great virtue should endure a body passible in such close contact with it. It taketh, then, the soul for as it were an envelope.

"And soul itself, being, too, a thing divine, doth use the spirit as *its* envelope, while spirit doth pervade the living creature.

* This will throw some light on the mystical meaning of the "chariot of fire" in which Elijah is said to have been translated to heaven, and much else.

"When, then, the mind doth free itself from the earth-body, it straightway putteth on its proper robe of fire, with which it could not dwell in an earth-body.

"For earth doth not bear fire; for it is all set in a blaze by even a small spark. And for this cause is water poured round earth, to be a guard and wall, to keep the blazing of the fire away.

"But mind, the swiftest thing of all divine out-thinkings, and swifter than all elements, hath for its body fire.

"For mind being builder doth use the fire as means for the construction of all things—the Mind of all for the construction of all things, but that of man only for things of earth.

"Stript of its fire the mind on earth cannot make things divine, for it is human in its dispensation.

"The soul in man, however—not every soul, but one that pious is—is a daimonic something, and divine.

"And such a soul when from the body freed, if it have fought the fight of piety—the fight of piety is to know God and to do wrong to no man—such soul becomes entirely mind.

"Whereas the impious soul remains in its own essence, chastized by its own self, and seeking for an earthly body where to enter, if only it be human.

"For that no other body can contain a human soul; nor is it right that any human soul should fall into the body of a thing that doth possess no reason. For that the law of God is this: to guard the human soul from such tremendous outrage."

Here we have an unbroken ray of light shining out of the darkness from the mysteries of Ancient Egypt. The secret teaching of the Adyta differed entirely from the popular superstitions; and though the populace were taught that they risked to be re-born in the bodies of animals, in order that fear might generate virtue, the better instructed were taught the higher doctrine. The same obtains unconsciously in Christianity to-day. Hell for the ignorant, a more enlightened teaching for those who can understand.

In the collection of heterogeneous books known as the Bible, the mistranslation of purely technical terms has resulted in the most elementary analysis of man into Soul and Body, or at best in a simple trichotomy into Body, Soul, and Spirit, which is quite insufficient for the understanding of the thought of some of the writers.

For instance, Paul, in his First Letter to the Corinthians (xv.), says that every seed has its appropriate body, that there are many kinds of

"Fleshes,"* and also Heavenly and Earthly Bodies (*σώματα ἐπουράνια καὶ σώματα ἐπίγεια*).

In this connection he speaks of the Bodies of the Sun, Moon and Stars which he calls "Glories" (*δόξαι*), and which we may compare with the "Fiery Vesture" mentioned by Hermes—Sidereal Bodies, to use the term of Paracelsus.

Later on he speaks of a Psychic and of a Pneumatic, or Spiritual, Body (*εἰ ἔστι σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἔστι καὶ πνευματικόν*); in connection with which he says that the "First Birth" is into a Living Soul (*ψυχὴν ζῶσαν*), whereas the "Second Birth"† will be into a Vivifying Spirit (*πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν*).

The "First Man" is said to be of the Earth, or rather of Liquid Earth, and hence called "Choïc"—reminding us of the Gnostic fourfold division into Choïc, Hylic, Psychic, and Pneumatic Bodies, but difficult to sort out from the Pauline text as it stands.

Further on we read of the "image" of the Choïc Man and of the "image" of the Heavenly Man—purely technical terms again.

It was in one of these Bodies that the Apostle

* The term "Flesh" certainly does not mean the physical body.

† These "Births" were the subjects of the Lesser and Greater Mysteries, the Mysteries of Generation and of Regeneration.

was rapt to the Third Heaven,* which Heavens —no matter how many so ever they be—have each an appropriate Vesture of Purity in which the indweller must be clothed. And there he heard those "Ineffable Words" (ἄρρητα ῥήματα) which cannot be uttered; they can no more be expressed in human speech than can the ocean be contained in a water-pot.

What the Gnostics and Allegorists and Kabalists taught concerning the "coats of skins" of our First Parents in the Mystical Garden of Eden I have already indicated; that, however, the idea may not rest solely on my statement, I append one out of many passages from their books. It is taken from the *Zohar* or "Book of Splendour":†

"When Adam dwelled in the Garden of Eden, he was dressed in the Celestial Garment which is a Garment of Heavenly Light. But when he was expelled from the Garden of Eden, and became subject to the wants of this world, what is written? 'The Lord God (Elohīm) made Coats of Skins unto Adam and to his wife, and clothed them' (Gen. iii. 21); for prior to this they had Garments of Light—

* 2 Cor. xii. 2.

† The translation with commentaries of the fourteenth century Zoharic documents by the late Hebraist Jean de Pauly, now being published in France, traces the oldest deposit of these documents as far back as the first century.

Light of that Light which was used in the Garden of Eden." *

For as the *Zohar* says elsewhere:

"The mystery of the earthly man is after the mystery of the Heavenly Man. And just as we see in the firmament above, covering all things, different signs which are formed of the stars and planets, and which contain secret things and profound mysteries, studied by those who are wise and expert in those signs; so there are in the skin which is the cover of the body of the son of man, and which is like the sky which covers all things, signs and features, which are the stars and planets of the skin, indicating secret things and profound mysteries." †

These mystical allusions can be interpreted in several ways. They may, for instance, be taken as referring to the subtle body of the Vedāntins and to the gross physical body. This subtle body is ray-like (*augo-eides*); it is in its subtler relations the star-like (*astro-eides*) or sidereal body—astral here meaning something that rays or projects forth and is not self-contained, rays of light rather than self-luminosity. Astral matter is said to interpenetrate all phy-

* *Zohar*, ii. 229*b*; see Mackenzie's *Royal Masonic Cyclopædia*, p. 411.

† *Ibid.*, ii. 76*a*; *op. cit.*, p. 412.

sical matter and to extend beyond it—in a non-physical sense, presumably.

But in a higher sense the mystic "Skin" is other; it is rather the "Surround," and is of an undulating nature. We might figure it, for a moment, as an undulating periphery surrounding rays or radii from a centre. This undulating surround would then signify the "buddhic" (not in the Vedāntic but in the Neotheosophical sense) envelope breathing; that is, inspired with ātmic energy. This is a new and different current, so to speak, in quite another direction from astral matter. It is always in motion in its own direction, but from the astral point of view it appears as stillness, for it has no astral motion or direction.

In this connection we might interpret the "signs and features" of this "Skin" as previous existences, or rather the powers of them, the "permanent atoms" of previous lives, hanging like planets in the sky.

All these in their inmost nature have many permanencies of various classes and kinds. We may imagine that as these permanent tendencies are built up, one class goes and lives in the "Moon," another in "Jupiter," and so forth.

We might imagine that the heavenly houses, the constellations, are the dwelling-places or habitations of our various permanent tendencies.

These houses may be regarded as the fields of activity of certain classes of motion which we have established within our self in previous lives; though this would not be quite correct, for here there is no "previous"; permanency is beyond reincarnation. Reincarnation is rather a process by means of which Personality, in its true sense, attains to these powers, attaches itself to them.

The "cover of the body of the son of man" is a strange phrase. It might be said that the "son of man" is here the mind; the "body" is vehicle or substance; the "cover" is that which contains it, its superior limit.

There is a curious Rabbinical tradition with regard to these "coats of skin" which may not be without interest, if quoted in this connection. It is found in the *Yaschar* or *Sepher Haiyaschar*, "The Book of the Just," more commonly known as "The Book of the Generations of Adam" or "The Book of the History of Man," which has been translated into French by the Chevalier P. L. B. Drach. The legend runs as follows:

"After the death of Adam and Eve, these coats were given to Enoch, son of Jared. Enoch, at the time of his being taken to God, gave them to his son Mathusalah. After the death of Mathusalah, Noah took them and kept

them with him in the Ark. Ham stole them, and hid them so successfully that his brethren were unable to find them. Ham gave them secretly to his eldest son Chus, who made a mystery of it to his brothers and sons. When Nimrod reached the age of twenty years, he (Chus) clothed him with this vesture, which gave him extraordinary strength."*

It was only when Nimrod was stripped of this garment that he could be killed.

We have all heard of Joseph's "coat of many colours"† (χιτῶνα ποικίλον, as the Septuagint translation has it), but few have any idea that this is a symbolical Garment of the Soul, woven of a warp and woof of beams from the Spiritual Sun, just as the prismatic rays originate from a physical beam of sunlight.‡

Such, again, is the Garment that all must be clothed in when the King Initiate comes in to see the guests, as we are told in the Gospel according to Matthew (xxii. 11). This "Wedding Garment" (ἔνδυμα γάμου) is no mortal dress, but a Garment of the Soul, a very real Vesture that we have to weave for ourselves.

* Migne, *Dictionnaire des Apocryphes*, tom. ii. coll. 1102, 1150.

† Gen. xxxvii. 3.

‡ Though, perhaps, if we are to be precise, this "coat" is rather "astral," for you can take it off and put it on.

It must be "a coat (χιτὼν) . . . without seam, woven from the top throughout" (John xix. 23) —the same which Joseph's Brethren, or his Powers,* brought back to his Father (Ātman) when they had sold the Beloved Son (Manas) into the slavery of incarnation in the Egypt of the body, and for which the soldiers cast lots when the Christ is crucified.

This is a very old story, but its interpretation is as old as the story itself, for I am simply repeating what the sages of old taught their disciples. And this brings me towards the completion of my essay, where I would try to convey some slight idea of the three Great Vestures of Initiation which correspond to the three higher principles of man. In that marvellous relic of Christianized Gnostic tradition called the *Pistis Sophia*, the three Vestures of the Glorified Christos or Perfected Man, the God-Man—what we may all be in some future birth—are thus described:

"But the disciples saw not Jesus because of the great Light in which He was, or which shone on Him; for their eyes were darkened because of

* The Powers on the side of the "Great Dragon," the Force which compels man to incarnate, that is, impels the Person to sink deeper and deeper into substance. It is a Force which strips him spiritually as he descends and clothes him as he ascends—a stationary Power or Permanency.

the great Light in which He was.* They saw the Light only, sending forth a host of light-rays.

"And the light-rays were not like to one another. The Light was of various kinds, and it was of various types, from below above, each ray being more admirable than its fellow . . . in a great Glory of immeasurable Light; it stretched from below the Earth right up unto Heaven. . . .

"It was of three degrees. The first was more admirable than the rest [? of the rays]; the second, which was in the midst, was more admirable than the first which was below it; and the third, which was above them all, was more admirable than the two below *it*."†

The Master explains this mystery to His Disciples as follows:

"Lo, I have now put on my Vesture, and all authority has been given me by the First Mystery.

"Yet a little while and I will tell you the Mystery of the All and the Fullness (*Plērōma*) of the All. I will hide nothing from you henceforth from this hour; but in perfectness will I perfect you in all Fullness, and in all Perfection, and in all Mysteries, which are the Perfection of all

* Visibility depends upon rays of light. When the Self-radiant throws His consciousness into the "Surround," He and His "Bodies" became invisible to mortal eyes, and to clairvoyants and thought-readers as well.

† *P.S.*, 5, 7; Mead, 5, 7; Schmidt, 3, 5.

Perfections, and the Fullness of all Fullnesses, and the Gnosis of all Gnoses—those which are in my Vesture. I will tell you all Mysteries from the Outer of the Outer to the Inner of the Inner. Give ear that I may tell you all things that have befallen me.

"It came to pass when the Sun had risen in the East, that a great Light-power descended, in which was my Vesture, which I had left behind in the Four-and-twentieth Mystery, as I have already said unto you.

"And I found a Mystery in my Vesture, written in Five Words* of those from the Height:

* Compare the Pañcha-Kosha or Five Sheaths of the Vedāntins previously referred to. For an explanation of the number *five*, and the pentagon, see *Secret Doctrine*, ii. pp. 575–580. In one of the books of the Peratæ Gnostics mention is made of a dodecagonal pyramid (δωδεκαγώνιον πυραμίδα) in a sphere of the colour of night (νυκτόχρουν). This pyramid—every side of which was a regular pentagon—had a door leading into it which was painted with variegated colours (ποικίλαις χρόαις). (See *Philosophumena*, v. 14.) It is through this fivefold door perchance that the Soul descends from the Spiritual World, which is now darkness to us because of our ignorance, into the Solar Universe, which was symbolized by the Platonic Solid called the Dodecahedron. This door is of many colours, like Joseph's coat, for what we call colours here below are the witnesses to very real powers or forces in spiritual nature. In the passage from the *Pistis Sophia* these are referred to as the five "Words" written on the Vesture of the Christos. They are perhaps the five attributes of the Spiritual Body of the Yogāchārya School of Buddhism, which will be referred to later on.

ZAMA ZAMA ŌZZA RACHAMA ŌZAÏ; of which the interpretation is this:

"O Mystery that is Without, in the World, because of which the All hath come into existence! This is the whole Out-going and the whole Up-going, which hath emanated all Emanations and all that is therein, because of which all Mysteries exist and all their Regions.

"Come unto us, for we are thy Fellow-Members (or Limbs); we are all one with Thee; we are one and the same. Thou art the First Mystery which existed from the beginning in the Ineffable before it came forth, and the Name * thereof is all of us.

"Now, therefore, we all together draw nigh unto Thee at the last Limit (that is, at the last Mystery from within); it is itself a part of us.

"Now, therefore, we have sent thee Thy Vesture, which indeed hath belonged to Thee from the beginning, which Thou didst leave behind in the last Limit, which is the last Mystery from within, until its time should be fulfilled, according to the Command of the First Mystery.

"Lo, its time is fulfilled; clothe Thyself therewith!

"Come unto us, for we all draw nigh unto Thee to clothe Thee with the First Mystery

* That is, Power.

and all His Glory, by Commandment of the same, in that the First Mystery hath given us it, consisting of two Vestures, besides the one that we have sent Thee, for Thou art worthy of them; for in sooth Thou art prior to us and came into being before us. Wherefore now hath the First Mystery sent Thee through us the Mystery of all His Glory, two Vestures." *

The text then goes on to detail the Hierarchies of Æons, Powers and Gods which compose these Heavenly Garments—corresponding detail for detail with the whole emanative potencies of the Universe whereby the Garment of Deity is woven, and then continues its magnificent exposition; the Living Powers which form the Vesture speaking as follows on the Great Day "Be with us"—the moment of the Supreme Initiation:

"Lo, therefore, have we sent Thee Thy Vesture, which no one from the First Law † downwards hath known, for the Glory of its Light was hidden in it [*sc.*, the Law], and all Regions from the First Law downwards have not known it.

"Make haste, therefore, clothe Thyself with this Vesture and come unto us; for we draw nigh unto Thee, in order to clothe Thee with Thy two

* *P.S.*, 15–17; Mead, 15–17; Schmidt, 10, 11.

† Or Precept.

Vestures, which have been for Thee from the beginning with the First Mystery, until the time appointed by the Ineffable should be fulfilled.

"Come, therefore, to us quickly, that we may clothe Thee with them, until Thou hast fulfilled the whole Ministry of the Perfection of the First Mystery, the Ministry appointed by the Ineffable.

"Come, therefore, to us quickly, that we may clothe Thee with them according to the Commandment of the First Mystery. For yet a little while, a very little while, and Thou shalt come to us and leave the world.

"Come, therefore, quickly, that Thou mayest receive Thy whole Glory, the Glory of the First Mystery."*

These three Vestures are the three Buddha-Robes.† They may be described as the Body of Transformation (Nirmāṇa-kāya), the Body of Bliss (Saṁbhoga-kāya), and the Body of Law (Dharma-kāya). Very little is definitely known concerning these Transcendent Vestures; even the Buddhist commentators themselves are obscure, so that the accounts we have in the books of various Oriental scholars are often contradictory and misleading. The highest is the Vesture of the Law, which "H. P. B." describes

* *P.S.*, 19, 20; Mead, 18, 19; Schmidt, 12.

† See *The Voice of the Silence* (1st ed.), pp. 96, 97.

as void of all attributes, and speaks of as an "ideal breath." It should rather be referred to Ātman, or probably Mahātman, the Great Breath. If this Vesture be assumed, then, according to the doctrine of the Mahāyāna-vādins, or followers of the Great Vehicle, every possible connection with the earth is at an end; and, therefore, the Buddhas of Compassion are said to lay it aside that they may still remain and work on for humanity. Nevertheless, Eitel in his *Sanskrit-Chinese Dictionary** speaks of the five attributes of this Vesture — which he calls "the Spiritual Body in five portions"—and describes them as follows:

"1. Precept . . . , exemption from all materiality (Rūpa).

"2. Tranquillity . . . , exemption from all sensations (Vedanā).

"3. Wisdom . . . , exemption from all consciousness (Sanjñā).

"4. Emancipation (Mokṣha) . . . , exemption from all moral activity (Karma).

"5. Intelligent views . . . , exemption from all knowledge (Vijñāna)."

In other words, exemption from the five Skandhas or groups of qualities.

These "attributes," it will be seen, are all explained in terms of negation, and the

* *Sub voc.*, "Pañcha Dharma-kāya."

first is, strangely enough, called "Precept," the identical idea preserved in the term "First Precept" or "First Law," used by the Gnostic writer in the last quotation from the *Pistis Sophia*. More; there are five of them—the precise number of "Words" written on the Vesture of the Gnostic narrative.

These three "Bodies," not Forms, correspond to the Trinity in every religion. In Buddhism the ineffable Ocean of Light and Compassion is called Bodhi. By bathing or being "baptized" in this, man becomes a Buddha or enlightened. These three Vestures are thus said to consist of "Essential Bodhi" (Dharmakāya), "Reflected Bodhi" (Saṁbhogakāya), and "Practical Bodhi" (Nirmāṇakāya).* And it is the last, the Vesture of Practical Bodhi, which, according to the Mahāyāna doctrine, is assumed by the Christs and Buddhas of Compassion who help on man's salvation.†

Perhaps it may not be without interest, when remembering the important part played by "sheep" in Christian symbolism, to learn that the three symbolic Vehicles of the Saints across the River of Life — the Streaming River, not

* See Eitel, *op. cit.*, *sub voc.*, "Trikāya."

† For a further consideration of the three Vestures (Trikāya) I would refer the reader to my article on "The Master" in *The Theosophical Review* (Nov., 1906), xxxix. 248 ff., and the Note in the December number, xxxix. 290 ff.

the Deep Ocean—or Conditioned Existence, are said by the Buddhists to be:

1. Sheep; *i.e.* Shrāvakas — Hearers or Beginners.

2. Deer; *i.e.* Praty-eka Buddhas—Solitaries, they who obtain salvation for themselves but are unable to impart their wisdom to others.

3. Oxen; *i.e.* Bodhi-sattvas — they of the essence (Sattva) of Bodhi, or Compassion and Wisdom.*

But the present theme is too lofty for my pen, and the Doctrine of the Great Renunciation of the two higher Vestures—to don the so-thought comparatively lowly one of the Nirmāṇakāya—has been treated of, in some measure, in other theosophical writings. What has been said, however, as to these Robes of Glory woven of Nature-Powers—which are really Human Powers, if we would only "help Nature and work on with her"—what little has been said may perhaps enable us to understand better the grand passage from the *Book of the Golden Precepts*, which tells of the Song of the Powers at the Birth of a Master, as follows:

"Behold the Mellow Light that floods the Eastern Sky! In Songs of Praise both Heaven

* See Eitel, *sub voc.* "Triyāna." Further information may be obtained from Schlagintweit's *Buddhism in Tibet*, p. 38.

and Earth unite. And from the Fourfold manifested Powers a Chant of Love ariseth, both from the flaming Fire and flowing Water, and from sweet-smelling Earth and rushing Wind.

"Hark! . . . From the deep Unfathomable Vortex of that Golden Light in which the Victor bathes, All-Nature's wordless Voice in thousand tones ariseth to proclaim:

"'Joy unto you, O men of Earth. A Pilgrim hath returned back from the Other Shore. A new Arhan is born.'" *

* *Voice of the Silence* (1st ed.), p. 72.

Feeling himself, his own low self, the whole;
When he by sacred sympathy might make
The whole one Self. Self, that no alien knows!
Self, far diffused as fancy's wing can travel!
Self, spreading still oblivious of its own,
Yet all of all possessing!

COLERIDGE.

Out of the furnace of man's life and its black smoke, winged Flames arise, Flames purified, that soaring onward, 'neath the Kārmic Eye, weave in the end the Fabric Glorified of the Three Vestures of the Path.

BOOK OF THE GOLDEN PRECEPTS

THE WEB OF DESTINY

How familiar to every child born of Christian parents is the phrase, "God created the world out of nothing"! It is a matter of belief; the reason cannot grasp it; it is foolishness to the formal reason and therefore pertains to the domain of faith. *Credo quia absurdum.* I was, however, once told by a Jesuit father that it was a "postulate of pure reason"; he added that as I was a rational being and had heard the truth, it was nothing but obstinacy of heart that prevented acceptance of the dogma, and that my end would be of a nature that is not mentioned in polite society. Philosophically it *is* a postulate of pure reason; literally it is absurd, and it was the literal interpretation I rejected.

There is truth and error in the dogma, for good and evil are hidden in all things. The good in it is that the human soul shrinks from admitting anything else than God in the boundless fields of being. Nothing but God. And the universe,

what of that? "Verily God created it." But how? "Out of nothing—but Himself," I think I hear the small voice whisper.

The dogma of "creation out of nothing" has its good side: for it is an attempt, when rightly understood, to bring home to the uninstructed mind the great truth that Deity in Its own energy does not perform the function of a fabricator; that Its "creations" are those of Will, transcendent and spiritual; and that the "creatures" of Its divine creation in their turn carry out the behests of the Divine Will, and emanate and evolve, build and fashion, the wondrous fabric of the universe.

The evil side of the doctrine is the use made of it by an ignorant priesthood to dwarf the human mind by ever imposing upon its natural questionings the dull weight of an unintelligible dogma, which crushes its sprouting life and terrifies the half-awakened intelligence with the nightmare of a vengeful Deity that punishes every timid turning of the soul to higher light.

Fortunately, however, there has been, long before this dogma became crystallized, and there still is, another view of the matter which avoids the Scylla and Charybdis of the extremes pointed out above—a view which supplies a golden mean or passage-way along which the soul can sail in safety.

The Things-that-are are from the Things-that-are-not; and the Things-that-are-not from the Things-that-are. For paradox alone can shadow forth the Mystery. As Phōsilampēs says:

"Through Him is that-which-really-is and that-which-really-is-not, through which the Hidden-which-really-is and the Manifest-which-really-is-not exists." *

I have myself little doubt that Phōsilampēs is the cryptonym of Basilides, the famous doctor of the Christianized Gnōsis who flourished in the first quarter of the second century. For Basilides (the King-like) writes:

"Such, or rather far more removed from the power of man's comprehension, was the state of Non-being, when † the Deity-beyond-being, without thinking, or feeling, or determining, or choosing, or being compelled, or desiring, willed to create Universality.

"When I use the term 'Will,'" continues Basilides, "I do so merely to suggest the idea of an operation transcending all volition, thought, or sensible action. And this Universality also was not our dimensional and differentiable uni-

* Quoted in "The Untitled Apocalypsis" of the *Codex Brucianus*, a Coptic Gnostic codex of the same tradition as the *Pistis Sophia*. See *Fragments* (2nd ed.), p. 553.

† If we can speak of "when" in a state transcending time and space.

verse (*kosmos*), which subsequently came into existence and was separated from other universes, but the Seed of all universes." *

But to come down to lower heights and human analogies.

In the Vaidic scriptures the Eternal is said to have *thought* the universe out of Himself, by the Self-emanative Power of Self-contemplation. In other words, the Supreme Being evolved or created the universe out of Himself; that is to say, Deity is both the efficient and the material cause of the universe.

Innumerable commentaries have been written upon the Vedas, and the habit of some of them is to argue out the great statements in these scriptures by bringing forward objection after objection. In fact, in the commentaries, there is a familiar dramatic character who is always turning up, called the "Objector."

"How then can it be possible," interrupts the Objector, "that God can be both the material and efficient cause? The potter makes his pots out of clay. The potter is not the same as the clay; the efficient and material causes are not the same person. The potter does not make the pot out of himself."

And then the writer of the commentary replies,

* *Op. cit.*, pp. 257, 258.

using a simile found in the sacred scripture itself: "Even as the spider spins its thread out of itself and withdraws it again, so this universe is spun out of the Supreme and is again withdrawn."

It is, however, carefully stated that a simile must not be confounded with an identity. The Supreme does not weave the Garment of the Universe out of Himself in precisely the same manner as the spider spins its web, but the simile of the spider is, at any rate, a nearer approach to the reality than the crude analogy of the potter.

So we may read in the *Shvetāshvataropaniṣhad* (vi. 10):

"May the One God, who, spider-like, enwinds Himself with threads spun from His object side,* following His Nature's Law—may He bestow on us Regression into Brahm." †

And again, in the *Muṇḍakopaniṣhad* (i. 7):

"Just as a spider spins forth and inwinds, as plants grow on the earth, as hair and down from man, so from Imperishable That comes forth this All." ‡

This "spinning" seems to suggest Buddhi, and

* Ob-ject, Pra-dhāna.

† Mead and Chaṭṭopadhyāya's trans., ii. 93; Deussen's trans., p. 308.

‡ Mead and Chaṭṭopādhyāya, i. 113; Deussen, p. 547.

Buddhi is thus spun out of Ātman like a spider's web out of a spider.

The Great God, or Supreme Cause or Logos, encases Himself, so to speak, in abstract Buddhi (Mahā-buddhi), or Bodhi, One mighty Web of Forces spun out of Himself.

Then comes the Demiurge, the Opposer, the Tyrant, to use a few of His many names, the Great Cosmic Adversary or Ruler, who is neither Matter nor Consciousness but Form, and this Mystery "*personifies*" God the Supreme Cause. That is to say, separates Him into Personæ or Actors, and imitates and acts the part of God. When this is effected the Great Supreme Cause is not *only* the Cause in One Web, but He is *also* many Ray-Persons; and each of these Great Persons, Sons of Mind, Sons of God, has bequeathed on him, we may dare to imagine, the Power to Create, and They each become a First Cause like Their Father is, only They are First Causes within a smaller range, or on a lower octave. Their "First Cause," their Creative Potency, may be said to be the Parāmatmic "Spark" within each of them, and this Light-and-Life-Spark (male-female) spins out of itself another Web of Destiny or Great Fate-Sphere.

Then cometh another Adversary or Divider, who "personifies" Them, and cuts Them up, so to say, into various facets, or men or minds.

Thus we might say, if it be thought not overdaring, God deprives Himself of freedom by Personifying Himself, or cutting Himself up into facets, or imitating, imagining, and acting Himself.

The idea of spider and web is found over and over again in the sacred books of the Hindūs; so much so that it is borne in upon the mind of the careful reader that such a frequent simile must correspond to a very important fact in nature. But there is another simile that is even more graphic. It is the figure of the chrysalis and the butterfly, in complement with of that of the silkworm and cocoon. And here let me quote one passage out of many which will give a foretaste of what this essay designs to treat.

The vast Indian epic, called the *Mahābhārata* or "Great War," is many times larger than the *Iliad* of the Greeks, and its epic dress is only the setting for long religious and philosophical discourses. One of its great divisions or books is called the "Book of Peace," and one of the subdivisions of this book is entitled the "Book of the Laws of Freedom." In it we read as follows:

"As the silkworm spinning its cocoon shuts in itself on every side in every way by means of its self-made threads, even so the Soul (Ātman), though in reality it transcends all attributes,

invests itself on every side with attributes [and thus deprives itself of Freedom]."*

This cannot but remind us of the graceful myth of Psychē among the Greeks. Psychē, the soul, painted and sculptured with butterfly wings—the soul that wings its joyful flight from the chrysalis of the body—is a figure so innate with life and beauty that the mind is at once held captive by the sweet graciousness of a so fair conceit.

Let us next turn to another ancient tradition, fragments of which are given by "H. P. B." in *The Secret Doctrine*, where we shall find the same idea of a Web and its spinning. One of the "Stanzas of Dzyan" runs as follows:

"Father-Mother spin a Web, whose upper end is fastened to Spirit, the Light of the One Darkness, and the lower one to its shadowy end, Matter; and this Web is the Universe, spun out of the Two Substances made in One."

Father-Mother is the graphic name for the Eternal when viewed as emanating the Universe out of Its own Essence. Spirit and Matter are names for the modes of Its Existence as viewed by little men. Spirit is that Light of which the Chaldæan tradition in the Book of Genesis speaks as created by the Divine Fiat that willed:

* *Op. cit.*, cccix.

"Let there be Light." It is the Light of the One Darkness, because Spirit is the brightest Light that the inner eye of man can bear; and yet beyond this the intuition declares there is That which transcends even this most glorious Light, but upon which no mortal can look and live, for to see it he must become immortal. And this is, therefore, darkness to our gaze, and so is not inappropriately termed the One Darkness. So, then, Father-Mother weave the Web of the Universe out of the two "Substances," Spirit and Matter, which really are not two in essence but one, for they are Father-Mother essentially.

In this connection it is hardly necessary to remind the reader of the words put into the mouth of the Erdgeist by the genius of Goethe:

Thus at the roaring Loom of Time I ply,
And weave for God the Garment thou see'st Him by.

This Garment of God is the Universe. The Loom of the Erdgeist roars as the shuttles fly on their cyclic journeyings back and forth; but their roaring is no chaotic cacophony, but the "harmonious song" of the "Spheres."

It may be useful to remark here with regard to the idea of a cocoon (for the Garment or Web is ever figured as spheroidal), that the symbol of an egg, or embryonic germ, is an index of the same idea; and its frequent occurrence in the old systems of cosmogenesis is because of

the marvellous manner in which so universal a phenomenon in nature shadows forth the mode of the inner workings of the Creative Energy.

Yet one more instance of the same idea, this time from the hieroglyphics of ancient Egypt. Several of the inscriptions on the Tombs of the Kings in the ancient sacred city of Thebes have been translated by Edouard Naville, the Swiss Egyptologist, and embodied in his book, *La Litanie du Soleil.* A few sentences from them, together with M. Naville's excellent commentary, come in very appropriately. Speaking of Teb Temt, the term for the Supreme Being in these old records, M. Naville writes:

"He is a Being enclosed in an Envelope, which is neither a sphere nor an egg, but more closely resembles the latter. The symbol which represents the envelope Teb has exactly the shape of the cocoon of the silkworm. This is, no doubt, the origin of the tradition handed on to us by Eusebius, which attributes the form of Θ * to the Universe." †

* This symbolized the Egg of the Universe with the Serpent of Wisdom or Spermatic Logos coiled round the equator, or, otherwise, enwrapping it in seven folds, or energizing within it.

† Translated in *Lucifer* (May, 1894), xiv. 218 ff., under the heading "The Dwellings of the Gods." *La Litanie du Soleil: Inscriptions recueillies dans les Tombeaux des Rois à Thèbes* (Leipzig; 1875).

And so the Litany sings praises as follows:

"Hail to Thee, Envelope Universal, Who createst Thy Soul, and causest Thy Body to revolve.

"The King journeys through the most secret Sphere; He explores the Mysteries that are there.

"The King addresses Thee as Rā; he praises Thee with His reason; the King is like unto God. . . .

"He moves of himself; he moves of himself.

"The Envelope of the Universe says: Ay, lead him into the Interior of My Sphere!"

This Chapter is said to the most-mysterious God. These words are written like unto the words on the two Doors of the Portal of the Empyrean, where the Transformation of the Kingly Osiris takes place. Again, the Litany continues:

"The Gods of the Empyrean bless him; the Hidden Gods rejoice in his honour.*

"They say unto him: Thy Person is the God of the Land of the Dead, thy Form is Teb Temt.

"The Hidden Gods speak to the Kingly Osiris; they rejoice in seeing him:

"Greeting to the Perfect and Blessed One,

* Compare with this the Song of the Powers in the Trismegistic tradition, in that of the *Pistis Sophia* document, and in the *Voice of the Silence.*

who comes forth from the Earth, the Destroyer of Forms.

"Great is thy Essence, thy Spirit, thy Shadow, which no man destroys, which lives where thou livest.

"He removeth the mysterious Flames of the Empyrean; for he draweth nigh to the Sacred Mysteries."

M. Naville's commentary on Teb Temt is illuminating; and as it sets forth very clearly one of the fundamental concepts of the Egyptian mystery-teaching, I shall not hesitate to reproduce it, for his authority in the domain of Egyptology proper is great.

"The first manifestation of the Highest Power, its first Form, is that which is called Teb Temt, which we have translated by 'Universe,' or, more literally, 'Universal Envelope.' We might even call it the Total, for this Form of Rā contains all things in itself, as the sum of an addition contains all the units of which it is composed. Temt is that which the Greeks call Pan (Πᾶν), the Great All, which, according to Herodotus, is the most ancient of the Gods; it is 'All that exists in the Cosmos' (*κόσμοιο τὸ σύμπαν*), as an Orphic Hymn calls it, considered as forming a single entity, Teb Temt. . . .

"The Cosmos is thus an Envelope which contains the God [Logos], just as the Litany teaches us. It is also the Egyptian idea repeated by Hermes Trismegistos, when he says that there is a Body enveloping all things, and that it must be represented under a spherical form, for such is the shape of the Cosmos.*

"This Great All, this Universal Being, hidden in the Womb of His Envelope, is the Lord of the Spheres; that is to say, He contains them all in Himself. . . . So many Gods, so many Spheres; so many Forms of Rā which make up the Cosmos, so many Spheres which are Dwellings for Them. Hence it follows that there is nothing absolutely fixed about the division of the Universe into Spheres.

"Sometimes Teb Temt is considered as a Unique Being, possessing a single Sphere; sometimes He is divided into seventy-five Beings, each possessing His own Sphere. There is even a general twofold division,† which occurs frequently, not only with regard to Spheres, but especially when treating of Heaven and Earth. Rā is often called God of the Two Spheres,‡ to

* *Cf.* Excerpt ix. from Stobæus, in my *Hermes*, iii. 46: "Conceive it, then, as being in itself a kind of figure of a sphere-like shape; so is the universe conformed."

† The syzygy idea. ‡ Of the Two Lands.

indicate the two sides, the two halves of the Cosmos.

"Teb Temt is a Being surrounded with an Envelope; there are many others in Egyptian cosmogony with this peculiarity, but He is the greatest, the vastest, which exists with this appearance.

"On other portions of the Tombs' inscriptions, not yet published, there are prayers to divers Beings which have to serve as Envelope to the Essence of the Defunct. And this is why Egyptian thought represents the Primordial Beings as chrysalides surrounded with their envelopes, or as enveloped in a sphere. This tradition is preserved in Thrice-greatest Hermes, when he teaches us that the Primordial Being is composed of an Essence and an Envelope."*

It would be easy to multiply quotations and produce weighty testimony in evidence of the frequency of this conception in ancient scriptures, but sufficient has already been said for our present purpose.

* This is a mistake; the passage, however, refers to the same mystery in man. See "The Perfect Sermon," viii. 2 (Mead, ii. 321): "And so, when He perceived that the 'essential' man could not be lover of all things unless He clothed him in a cosmic carapace, He shut him in within a house of body, and ordered it that all men should be so; from either nature making him a single blend and fair-proportioned mixture."

The study of the visions or allegorical descriptions of creation, and of the origin and genesis of the universe, which are found in every great scripture, would be of only minor importance, however, if it had but a remote bearing on human affairs. If primordial processes and the development of long series of hierarchies are simply to serve as a pretext for airy metaphysical speculation, they can be of interest only for a very limited class of minds.

If, on the other hand, the processes of the Great World are directly applicable to the processes of the little world,* if the history of the universe is also the history of man, then the study of such processes is of very vital interest to us; for they teach us the history of the spirit and soul in man, and so wean us from the illusion that we are mere body, and the powers of man only such as the physical body will permit us to wield.

We have all heard the trite old aphorism, commonly called Hermetic, "As above, so below,"† and some have learned to realize its truth, and understand how it helps the solution of the great problem of life as no other method

* See my *Orpheus*, pp. 27 ff.

† Unfortunately, generally worked out in terms of "as below, so above," and on the erroneous assumption that analogy is the same as identity.

will. Analogy of processes and the great fact that man is potentially Deity, that "This is That," as the grand logos or Mahāvākyam of the Vedas has it, is the only means whereby a solution of the problem can be attempted; and a religion or a philosophy, or a science, that neglects this central fact ends nowhere but in confusion. As the *Kaṭhopaniṣhad* (II. iv. 10) says:

"What verily is here, that too is there; what there, that here again. From death to death he goes who here below sees seeming difference." *

That is to say, what is true of man is true of the Universe; what is true of the Universe is true of man; what is true of the Heavenly Man, the Great World, is true of little man, the little world.

Let us, then, bear this in mind, and apply it to the subject in hand, our Web of Destiny. The Web of Destiny is not one but three, not single but threefold, for are there not three worlds? The threads of the Web are gross, subtle, and subtler than subtle, for is not *man* body, soul, and spirit? And is not *man* God, did he but know it? There is but one Self "hidden in the heart of all creatures." It is the bodies that make the Self *seem* different, for

* Mead and Chaṭṭopādhyāya, i. 68; Deussen, p. 280.

He *is* one for all. These bodies are webs of destiny, self-evolved, self-woven.

There are those who think that man is but his physical body; not so say the scriptures, however. The seers of truth speak of man as spirit, soul, and body, and the wisest say that the Self is beyond.

In man, the Self is enwrapped, and yet not really enwrapped—for all words are incapable of truly stating the mystery—involved, rather, in a spiritual body, in a psychic body, and in a physical body; three webs of destiny, or, if you prefer it, in one Web of triple texture.

The spiritual, psychic, and material vestures clothe the Self in a triple disguise that produces this seeming separateness, which is called the "Great Heresy" by those who know the Self.

The Vedāntic psychologists call them the gross, subtle, and causal vestures or disguises, and the early Christian mystics, generally called Gnostics, classified mankind into Hylics, Psychics, and Pneumatics. These Greek names signified that men were to be distinguished according to the bonds in which they were bound, according to the error in which they were plunged, for Hylē means matter, and Psychē soul, and Pneuma spirit.

But these vestures are living vestures, for there is the material life, and the psychic life,

and the spiritual life—three oceans of Life with their appropriate consciousness, and yet not three but one, for they, too, are the Self. For what is more precious to man than life; what does he cling to with such desperation? He clings to the Self, for Life is the Self. Through Life alone can we have some conception of God here in this world. Life is God.

And so we have three bodies and three lives: the habitual or material life, the emotional or psychic life, and the intuitional or spiritual life, and yet all is one—the Self. Here we have in simplest analysis one aspect of the sevenfold nature, so much talked of and so little understood.

It is by what the Vedāntins call the "false attribution" of the Self to the gross vesture, or physical body, that the "waking" consciousness, or habitual life, is experienced; by the false attribution of the Self to the subtle vesture, or psychic body, that the "dreaming" consciousness, or emotional life, is sensed; and by the false attribution of the Self to the causal vesture, or spiritual body, that the "deep sleeping" consciousness, or noëtic life, is enjoyed.

These terms, "deep sleeping," "dreaming," and "waking," are very inadequate, and are only the reflections or memories of the three great lives, or states of consciousness, in our

small brains. For what we call dream is only a memory, and what we call deep sleep is only a reminiscence, a vague feeling that we have slept ill or well.

These three states *appear* to us in our normal consciousness as waking and dreaming and deep sleep; but there is a waking consciousness appropriate to each of the three bodies of man, and a dreaming state, and one of so-called deep sleep; and beyond all is the "Fourth," the "Peace that passeth all understanding."

Here below in this world we are wrapped round in a triple vesture, for all things centre together here in the battlefield of good and evil. The triple "carapace of selfhood" imprisons and confines us.

In the "interspace," or "middle distance," there are but two vestures, if complete severance from physical bonds can be achieved; but if not, the shadows cast by the blackness of the sins committed in the body are reflected into the world of the soul and accompany it on its passage through the "hall of learning."

In the highest world there is but one, the vesture of causation; and in this "heaven-world" the disciple learns the past and future. They say the wise can separate these three vestures at will, can assume and lay them aside, for the Self strides through the three worlds in

the twinkling of an eye — that is, an instantaneous change of conscious perception.

The mystics of the early days of the Christian era, now condemned as heretics, knew of these sacred things, and understood the meaning of the outward rites and symbols. Thus they called those who had no thought for anything but the body and its pleasures the "Dead."

These were the Hylics, the "sepulchres," for they were indeed dead to higher things; such men and women were naturally without the Community of real "Christians"; not placed without by any man-made ordinances, but naturally outside the "Church" or Assembly of Saints. For to enter therein they had to "rise from the Dead" and be "baptized." This Baptism was no outer form; the outer form was but a symbol. It was a real natural process open to all men, not to be given by favouritism, not to be withheld by mortal hands. And there were two great Baptisms, the Lesser and the Greater, not to speak of others: the Baptism of Water, and the Baptism of Fire or of the Holy Spirit. These were the lower and the higher Greater Mysteries that we hear of among the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Persians and elsewhere.

For what is the Baptism of Water? We know what water is here on earth; but just as the "dreaming" state is but a memory and

reflection of the true state of the soul in our waking consciousness, so is the water of the earth a reflection of the true Water of Nature.

"On my soul, gentlemen, ye have never seen the True Earth," says Eugenius Philalethes. And he might have added: "On my soul, good friends, ye have never seen the True Water of Life."

For this Water is the Ocean of Soul-life, the "Astral" Ocean, that causes the soul-sight to live. It was only when the Pilgrim had learned to put on his subtle vesture at will and was "dowsed" into the Waters of the Ocean of pure Astral Light and Life, that he was indeed "baptized with water." And yet these were but the lower of such High Mysteries. Those who were illumined by this *natural* initiation were called Psychics.

But the Higher Mysteries pertained to the Perfect, the Just. The Baptism of Fire was the Reception of the Spiritual Influx of Divine Light and Life.* The Breath of the Holy Spirit or True Air vivified and energized their spiritual bodies, and thus they were called Pneumatics.

Beyond these Greater Mysteries, transcendent and unspeakable as they are said to be, there was something grander and still greater and

* The Higher Mind; Fire proper being still more glorious, the Highest Mind.

more wondrous. Beyond the three states is the "Fourth." The Self, the Father, is ever waiting on the threshold for his children. It is the Mystery of the At-onement, the Baptism of Blood, when the very Life and Essence of Deity is given that man may be one with the Highest. Pity it is that these high things are so degraded in our age. But we are in the mire and must make the best of it.

Let us now return to our three vestures, the kārmic webs that we have woven for our weal and woe. The third "depends" on the second, and the second on the first. The physical body is the product of the psychic, and the psychic of the spiritual. Or, in other words, the gross vesture is "precipitated" through the force-mould of the psychic vesture, by means of the character and experience stored up in the spiritual vesture.

Each vesture has its appropriate life-span. The "shadow-man" lives longer than the physical, it may be but a few years, it may be centuries, for its life-span is as variable as that of the physical vesture, though its normal life is of greater length.

But both these life-cycles are governed by the great life-cycle of the spiritual body. The gross and subtle bodies have their root in the causal.

This is the perennial root living throughout

the "eternity." On this "all the worlds depend," as the scripture saith, or, in other words, from it grow all the bodies, subtle and gross, that serve as vestures for the reincarnating Lord.

And seeing that these psychic and physical bodies sprout forth from it and die down into it, as the summer and winter of its great year cause the warm life now to be breathed forth and then to be withdrawn, it needs must be that all causation rests with it; that it is the kārmic storehouse of all that each man was, is, and will be; that (to use another simile) it is the very "book of the recording angel."

It is because of this that the whole past of a man surrounds him on every side; it is impressed on his psychic vesture (the sidereal or astral man), for it is the "influence of the stars"; it is stamped upon his physical frame and features.

But these "stars" are not the stars of heaven; and the predictions of astrologists and cheiromantists and the rest are based on a correspondence and not on a reality. True astrology deals with something higher.

Nor need we go further than the mythology of the Book of Genesis to gain a conviction of the truth of this triple nature of man. For there is first the Man made in the "Image" of

God, and then the Adam of "red-earth," who dwelt in Paradise, a psychic and no physical region. The paradisaical body is the soul, and not until man is cast out of Paradise does God, lastly, fashion for him his "coat of skin." Only when man is born into physical life is he clad in the gross vesture of the material body.

Can anyone, as we have asked before with Origen, be so foolish as to think that God actually made for Adam and Eve garments from the skins of animals wherewith to clothe them?

Let us leave such crudities to the uninstructed congregations of our little "Bethels," and proceed to see whether it is possible for man to escape from the triple Web of his Destiny; and how the passivity of the three great Oceans of Life may be changed into the activity of the three great Lights; and how that the triple-tongued Flame may burst forth and destroy the webs and join the Ineffable Grand Master, the Fire-Self.

Perhaps some may think that, as I am writing about Destiny, I should therefore enter into a long disquisition on freewill and necessity; but I have no desire to enter into that endless squirrel-wheel of controversy. Freewill and necessity are mutually dependent; each exists because of the other; remove one and the other ceases to be. They are a pair of opposites, and

the best religion and philosophy teach that there is That which transcends all pairs of opposites, and that man in his inmost nature can reach that all-desirable Goal, which is the Solution of the great problem of manifested existence.

But, again, someone may ask, surely this Web of Destiny is not eternal? By no means; to be eternal, in the absolute sense of the word, it needs must be woven with the shuttle of the Eternal Will. That is to say, that into all our acts and words and thoughts we must put the whole of the Eternal Will of the Universe; and surely this is impossible in the very nature of things! That which we think to be ourselves, that which acts in us now, is not the Self but that which we think to be ourselves. It is not a reality, but an ever-changing and impermanent something. For no matter how long it may persist, even for an "eternity," it is not Eternal in the absolute sense of the word. The Eternal, the One Reality, knows no change.

The Web of the Universe is woven with the shuttle of Divine Love—Love for all that lives and breathes. It is that Deific Desire for universal good or harmony; it is a perpetual Self-sacrifice, giving of its Life and Light to all without distinction.

Thus it is in the "Above"; but in the "Below," here in the world of men, the shuttle

whereby we weave our web of destiny is the shuttle of desire. This is selfishness; a power that concretes, that draws to itself for itself. We weave our webs of destiny from the warp and woof of things of sensation and of matter, by means of the shuttle of desire.

But as this lower desire is no stronger than ourselves, our lower natures, it cannot be that the fabric it weaves should be eternal. It is made up of ever-changing and impermanent materials, and so must cease when the energy that produced it is exhausted.

What is most important to realize, however, is that this Web is a living thing. What we call matter is negative life, inertia; but the Web of Destiny extends beyond matter into the realms of feeling, emotion, volition and mind. Thought is one of the most important energies by which it is woven. As the *Dhammapada* of the Buddhists says (x. 3):

"All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts."

This is the great teaching brought out so powerfully in the Gospel of Christendom: "He who casteth his eyes on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery already with her *in his heart.*" That is to say, in his soul, within

the region of his mind which is so potent a region of his universe.

Though this teaching is not explained at length in the Christian canon, in the Buddhist and Vaidic scriptures there are numberless dissertations on the nature and power of thought. One example will suffice. In the *Maitrāyaṇopaniṣhad* (vi. 34) we read:

"Thought* causes the round of birth and death; † man should strive to purify his thought. As thou thinkest, so art thou; a puzzle, yet for ever true!"

"Thought turned to coming unto Peace brings to an end both good and evil work. ‡ Who with himself at peace is stable in the Self, gains Blessedness unending." §

This is the same teaching as that of the Sermon on the Mount: "The pure in heart shall see God."

It is thought turned to things of sense that weaves our web of destiny; whereas thought turned to things of the spirit weaves us a glorious vesture. But this vesture is still a web, though a garment of peace; and for true Freedom the way out must be by right action: potent,

* Thought based on feeling.
† Saṁsāra.
‡ Karma.
§ Deussen, p. 357.

energic doing according to the Great Will, the Inworking in us of Ātman.

This vesture of thought and the rest, then, is a very real thing. It is alive, it lives in us. This was also the belief of ancient Egypt. After the death of the body, the soul was said to pass forth on its path through the different regions of the Amenti. Just as the soul had shed off its body, so did the spirit shed off its psychic vestures, as it passed back into its own state; and these vestures, just as the body here below consists of countless "lives," consisted of living "beings," were woven out of living "threads." In the *Litany of the Sun* already referred to, mention is made of "prayers to divers *beings* which have to serve as envelope to the essence of the Defunct."

Just as there are millions of small "lives" which serve as our physical bodies, so also do millions of "elementals" (as they are called) of each plane make up our bodies on these planes. But besides having these millions of little "lives" for an envelope, we also, according to Egyptian mystogogy, have various great creatures, so to say, who serve as vehicles to "convey" us from one state of consciousness to another, even as the Christ according to Christian orthodoxy, or Abraham in Jewish tradition, conveys us from earth to heaven.

These great creatures are man's own various bodies, for he has as many as the system planets, or the universe constellations. They are the "sacred animals," lords, governors, controllers and rulers of the little lives that form the sheaths. But when these sheaths become vestures, when a man rises towards Christhood and is no longer sunk in human feebleness, these vehicles are no longer sheaths made up of masses of myriads of little lives, but they become vestures or single garments, powerful and well-controlled for each plane, or each mode of life and consciousness.

But to return to the subject of "thought"; the question now arises: "If this is so, how is it possible to avoid for ever weaving this awful Web of Destiny more and more densely round ourselves? Thoughts come into our mind unbidden. It is impossible to get rid of them."

Now in the Roman Catholic Church there is a teaching that there is no sin if a man does not join his "will" to the thought. This is precisely the teaching of the other religions I have referred to, and is consonant with the whole of what I have previously written. There is a continual procession of "thoughts" ever passing through our minds—empty shapes, shadows and images. We can reject these shadows, and let them pass on, or arrest them by fixing our attention upon them. If we go further and give our consent to

them, we put our desire into them, and so breathe into them the breath of our life. They then become part of us; we have ensouled them; they are our children. If our desire is selfish and impure, then these children of ours are of a like nature, and we weave round ourselves and into our nature evil and impure forces.

I know that these things have been written of over and over again, but the story will not spoil for re-telling. As we live, with every moment we give birth to that which will be our self in a future existence and a future life. We are giving birth to a child. And if we, the dual parent of this child, are impure, passionate and immoral, the child we generate will be of like nature.

Just as diseased and immoral parents, parents who procreate children in drunkenness and in obedience to the dictates of mere animal lust, give birth to abortions, crippled, lunatic and vicious children, so does each one of us give birth to an abortion if we are slaves of our desires.

But if, on the other hand, we strive to transmute our lower desire into the Divine Love and Will, then we may give birth to a Divine Child which will in time grow into the full stature of the Heavenly Man.

This is the "Second Birth," or Regeneration, or Birth from Above, the Spiritual Creation, spoken of by the Christ in the Gospel. This is

why the Brāhmaṇs (not those who are born into a physical caste, but those who truly know Brahman), or the Eternal, are rightly called the "Twice-born."

Yes, we can escape from our Web of Destiny by weaving for ourselves the Glorious Vesture of the Spirit, the "Wedding Garment," the "Coat woven without seam of the Christ."

As the "Book of Peace" says:

"By casting off, through the aid of Yoga, these five faults — attachment, heedlessness, covetousness, lust, and wrath, a man attains to Freedom.

"As large fishes, breaking through the net, pass into their own element [to sport in blessedness], after the same manner Yogins [breaking through the net of lust, wrath and the rest] become cleansed of all sins and attain to the blessed state of Freedom.

"As powerful animals, breaking through the nets with which the hunters surround them, escape into the blessed state of freedom, after the same manner Yogins, freed from all bonds, attain to the sinless path that leads to Liberation.

"Feeble beings, entangled in acts,* are surely

* These acts are not the true Acts of which I have spoken above, but the doings of the "procession of Fate," as Hermes Thrice-Greatest calls the "shadow-man," the man who is not led by the Mind (Ātman).

destroyed. Even such is the case with those destitute of Yoga-power.

"As weak fishes, fallen into the net, become entangled in it, even so men destitute of the power of Yoga encounter destruction [amid the bonds of the world].

"Bound by the bonds of their acts, they that are weak meet with destruction, while they that are possessed of strength break through them." *

"The kingdom † of heaven is to be attained by violence." Yoga means Union, the striving for Union with the Divinity that is in the Heart of all creatures. This is the At-onement which is the consummation of all religion. Yoga-power is the strength of the spiritual life, the energizing with the Divine Will. It is to be developed by "brooding" upon it; by service of the Eternal, that is, by dedicating the whole of one's life to the Self; and by faith, that is, by faith and confidence in the possibility of such union.

It is said that the Supreme Being created the universe by means of such Brooding (Tapas). By wrapping oneself round with this great Spiritual Power, by ever living in it, by realizing the great Presence of the Eternal, the Germ of the Divine Child will develop within. This Brooding is the enformation of a Virgin Womb,

* *Mahābhārata*, Shānti Parvan, Mokṣhadharma Parvan, cccl.

† Or, rather, kingship.

from which the Immaculate Child shall be born. This Brooding is also Heat and Fire.

It is thus that the three Streams of life and consciousness (see p. 146) no longer carry the man passively, his consciousness drifting in the three Oceans of external existence; but a great transformation is effected, and his three Natures change into active Energies which become three Fires, or rather a triple-tongued Flame that finally blazes forth into the great Fire and Light of the universe.

Without doubt we can cast off our old garments of desire and stand in the purified Robes of Divine Will and Universal Compassion. To cast off our old squalid raiment we must practise non-attachment to it. We must be willing to stand naked before our Self, and this we cannot do unless we love that Self.

There is a negative and a positive method to be followed. The practice of non-attachment to the things of matter, both to our possessions in this world, and also to all that we think is *ours* within, is absolutely necessary; but this alone is not sufficient. It must also be accompanied by the positive love of the Highest and the Best, of the Self within. Both these powers are necessary.

But there is danger even here; there is danger that a man should seek that Self for himself alone, should love that Self that so he may gain salvation for his own sake.

Therefore it is, that he who would gain true Wisdom, and live and realize the Self here on earth, must learn to love that Self in all that lives and breathes, and not in himself alone.

Then, and not till then, will he be on the Path of Final Liberation from the delusion of that Spiritual Ignorance which causes him to weave his Web of Destiny.

This is the doctrine of the Christ, the Saviour, the Spirit within, the One from whom the many come, if we could but understand it. This is also the teaching of Egypt of old. To quote yet once more from the inscriptions on the Tombs of the Kings of ancient Thebes:

"The Kingly Osiris is an Intelligent Essence. His Limbs conduct him; his 'Fleshes' open the way for Him. Those who are born from Him, create Him. They rest when they have caused the Kingly Osiris to be born.

"It is He who causes them to be born. It is He who engenders them. It is He who causes them to exist. His Birth is the Birth of Rā in Amenti. He causes the Kingly Osiris to be born; He causes the Birth of Himself."

A magnificent passage indeed; replete with mystery, and yet sun-clear for the mystic!

The Kingly Osiris is Ātman, the True Man, not the Ego but the Monad. This is the Kingly

Osiris in his male-female nature, self-creative. That in which he creates himself is also himself, his spouse and his self-emanated substance.

From the latter point of view the Kingly Osiris may be said to be that highest vesture of the separated Self, the spiritual body. It is the causal vesture, the kārmic treasury, from which the soul proceeds. The personalities all come forth from this Divine Source or Personality according to the kārmic law. The many came forth from the One. This is the Perennial Root from which we came forth and into which we return; and by "we" I mean the "I am I," the real "I am" that is for the eternity. This "I am" is "Intelligent Essence."

"Those who are born from him" are our selves; and the personal man in union with his other selves, the limbs that make one Self, shall by his efforts at self-purification, and by his aspiration towards the Divine Prototype within, grow like unto the Spiritual Man. So that at last he shall become at-one with the Christ within, and so "create" the Kingly Osiris. And then shall we be at Rest, then shall we have found refuge in the "Self of Peace," then shall we have reached that "Peace of God that passeth all understanding," and the Web of our Destiny shall be the same as that of the self-made and self-appointed Destiny of God.

Deum te igitur scito esse.
Know then that thou art a God.

CICERO, SOMNIUM SCIPIONIS.

Oṁ! Shāntiḥ, Shāntiḥ, Shāntiḥ!
UPANIṢHADS, *passim.*

Oṁ! Peace, Peace, Peace!

TRUE SELF-RELIANCE

A STUDY FROM CICERO AND THE UPANIṢHADS

WHAT am I? Whence came I? Whither do I journey?

Verily, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, mourning, and not to be comforted either by the lifeless dogmas of an effete theology or the cold denials of a materialistic science.

It is from the sages of old, from the wise of the past, that the answer comes:

That art thou. From That didst thou come. Into That shalt thou return.

Ay, That art thou! That is thy Self, none other.

Such were the final words whispered into the ear of the disciple in the golden days of ancient Āryāvarta. True then, true countless ages before, true for the rest of the eternity. Nowhere else is to be found true Self-reliance, nowhere else that Peace which none can take away.

A cold creed!—do I hear some one say?

Nay, not cold. It is a truth that transcends enthusiasm, that surpasses all hope, that merges the highest ideal of love into an endless, boundless compassion for all that lives and breathes. For thus runs the Upaniṣhad:

"Now unto thee, again, the secret old of Brahman I will tell. . . .

"The Man that wakes when others sleep, dispensing all desires,—That truly is pure, That Brahman, That deathless is verily called; in That all worlds are contained; past That truly naught goes at all. This verily is That.

"As fire, though one, entering the world, like to the various forms in form became; so does the Inner Self of all creation, though one, like to the various forms in form become, yet is without them all.

"As air, though one, entering the world, like to the various forms in form became; so does the Inner Self of all creation, though one, like to the various forms in form become, yet is without them all.

"Just as the sun, the eye of all the world, is not besmirched with outer stains seen by the eyes; so that one Inner Self of all creation is never smeared with any pain the world can give, for it standeth apart.

"Sole Sovereign, Inner Self of all creation,

Who makes the One Form manifold—the wise who gaze on Him within their self, theirs and not others' is Bliss that aye endures.

"Lasting for aye amid unlasting things, the very consciousness of those who conscious are, Who, One, of many the desire dispenses—the wise who gaze on Him within their self, theirs and not others' is Peace that aye endures.

"They think of Him as That — the Bliss Supreme that all description beggars." *

The Inner Self is here the Self of Peace, the Shānt'ātman; as *such* it is apart from our little miseries. It is men who would have it miserable for their sakes. We might just as well think that the sun is sorry for shadows and cries about them; whereas it is the cause of them. When men are wise they learn how to enjoy shadows; then and then only can they get to the true state of Nirvāṇa.

The Upaniṣhad then proceeds to explain that this Highest Self is self-luminous, and the cause not only of the light on earth, but also of that in the heaven. The Self shines *by its own light*; it is *self-motive.*

The light of the true Ātman shines forth onto matter and illuminates it. The pure power of Ātman can shine onto anything and become

* *Kaṭhopaniṣhad*, v. 6–14; Mead and Chaṭṭopādhyāya, i. 71–73; Deussen, pp. 282–284.

that thing immediately, at once. In this state, it is said, there is no need to create vehicle after vehicle, to collect material and make up a body, and call it oneself. The true Man is self-luminous, and everything He shines upon reflects His light, and the things He shines upon He calls Himself or His body. They are the manifestation of Himself.

And so when such a one, a Master, talks to a person, He shines upon them, and they reflecting Him, become for the time His body, His own self-expression. He can thus be anybody, and also a great many people all at once. They only need to have their attention truly turned to Him and to be capable of reflecting His light. All may reflect light, but some do so more than others; it depends upon their "colour," and colour is in this connection spiritual intelligence.

The Inner Self is thus the secret of true Self-reliance; nowhere else is a lasting Basis to be found, nowhere else unchanging Certitude. In His Self-motivity resides the Essence of Immortality and nowhere else; it is the Essence of Divinity in man. A man must grow from within without, for such is the law. All other growth is artificial and unnatural, deceptive and illusory.

No one from without can give us Peace and Blessedness; these must perforce come from

within, from the Inner Self of all creatures—our true Highest Self.

Even should a Master—a Jīvanmukta, one who has attained union, while still in the body, with that Highest Self—cast the Mantle of His Power round the disciple, should he wrap him in His Presence, even then it were to no profit if the disciple is not ready to burst the veils of his Soul with *self-effort.*

If the nature of the disciple does not respond of its own will, and grow of its own energy, the artificial exaltation would be not only unprofitable but even injurious. For the instant the protecting wall were removed, the reaction would sweep the unprepared neophyte off his feet. The passions and desires that had been curbed and held back by the external power of the Master would fiercely spring forth, and the lassitude of the pupil's will, following the artificial stimulus, would be unable to check their wild career.

And this is why it is so difficult even for a Master to interfere with the natural growth of the disciple. This is what is meant by saying that even sages "dare" not interfere with the fruiting of karma. Nature must work on in her own way, and growth must proceed *from within without*, and not from without within.

This applies to all of us, especially in the

mental attitude we take up in theosophy. The perfect fruit of nature is the birth of the true Man. It is no artificial creation, but a natural steady growth; a birth with pain and sorrow, with mighty throes suffered and joyfully endured. But to be perfect it must be *self-born*, it must be Divine, and that which is born from another than the Self is other than Divine, subject to death and decay.

We *must* work out our own salvation, wisely, humbly, nobly. There are no swaddling clothes for the Self, no apron-strings to tie the Soul to; from the very beginning it must walk of itself, of its own energy and force. There is no spoon-meat, no nursing, no whimperings to be hushed. It is a *Man*, no animal embryo. It strides forth as a Giant from the Egg that envelops it.

They who have conquered are Shepherds of Compassion, not sheep; are Lions of Mercy, not deer. They are the Christs and the Buddhas, and it is Their will that all shall be like unto Them, all be one with Them.

Let us not, then, weakly repeat the words of others, and reflect the thoughts of others; but if the words are good and the thoughts wise, strive to develop in ourselves the spirit that dictated such words or induced such thoughts. Masters do not desire the mere monkeydom of external imitation, or the parrot-like repetition

of words. They require Companions on whom reliance can be placed, because such Companions rely on that Self which is the Self of Masterhood.

The Secret of the Self is that it is Self-motive. As Cicero writes, repeating the noble doctrine of the Stoics and of the Mysteries, putting the words into the mouth of the dead father of the younger Scipio:

"Strive on, with the assurance that it is not thou who art subject to death, but thy body. For that which is really thyself is not the being which thy bodily shape declares. But the real man is the thinking principle of each, and not the form which can be pointed to with the finger.

"Of this, then, be sure, that thou art a God; inasmuch as Deity is that which has will, sense, memory, foresight; and rules, regulates and moves the body it has in charge, just as the Supreme Deity does the universe. And like as Eternal Deity guides the universe, which is in a certain degree subject to decay, so the Sempiternal Soul moves the destructible body.

"Now that which is ever in motion is eternal. Whereas that which communicates motion to something else, and which is set in motion by an external cause, must necessarily cease to exist when its motion is exhausted."

And then (as Macrobius says), repeating the

Phædrus of Plato, word by word Tully continues:

"That, therefore, which has the principle of motion-in-itself, seeing that it can never fail itself, is the only eternal existence, and, moreover, is the source and causative principle of motion to all other bodies endowed with movement.

"The causative principle, however, can have no antecedent cause. For all things spring from this principle, which cannot, in the nature of things, be generated from anything else; for if it were so, it would cease to be the principal cause.

"And if this is without beginning, it can evidently have no end; for if the principle of causation were destroyed, it could not be re-born from anything else, nor give birth to anything out of itself, for all things must necessarily be generated from the causative principle.

"The principle of motion, therefore, comes from that which is endowed with self-movement; and this can suffer neither birth nor death; otherwise every heaven would collapse, and every nature necessarily come to a standstill, seeing that it could no longer obtain that force by which it was originally impelled.

"Since, therefore, it is evident that that

only is eternal which is self-motive, who is there to deny that this is a rational attribute of souls?

"For everything that is set in motion by external impulse is destitute of the soul-principle, whereas everything ensouled is energized by an interior and self-created motion; for this is the soul's proper nature and power.

"And if it alone of all things has the attribute of self-movement, it surely is not subject to birth but is eternal." *

In commenting on this passage, Macrobius gives a number of syllogisms which may be useful to set down here.

"1. The soul is self-motive: Whatever is self-motive is ever in motion: Therefore the soul is ever in motion.

"2. The soul is ever in motion: Whatever is ever in motion is immortal: Therefore the soul is immortal.

"3. The soul is self-motive: Whatever is self-motive is the principle of motion: Therefore the soul is the principle of motion.

"4. The soul is the principle of motion: Whatever is the principle of motion is not subject to birth: Therefore the soul is not subject to birth.

* From "The Dream of Scipio," in Cicero's *De Republica*, vi.

"5. The soul is not subject to birth: Whatever is not subject to birth is immortal: Therefore the soul is immortal.

"6. The soul is self-motive: Whatever is self-motive is the principle of motion: Whatever is the principle of motion is not subject to birth: Whatever is not subject to birth is immortal: Therefore the soul is immortal." *

But there are those who rely on their intellect, on their strength, on their wealth or position, their beauty, their relatives or their friends. This is not true Self-reliance, for all these pass away.

Intellect will fade in its turn, just as the body fades in its small cycle, for, as the Upaniṣhad has it:

"Thou art the Vesture of the Highest [which in its turn is] enveloped in the Intellect."

Intellect in this sense is an envelope, a veil to be removed, a garment to be purified, before the true Self shines forth.

Strength and wealth and position and beauty are even more impermanent; strength and beauty fade even before the body wears out, and wealth and position must be abandoned when Yama, the Lord of Death, the Great Constrainer, speaks the word.

Friends and relatives, parents, husband, wife

* *Commentarius in Somnium Scipionis*, II. xiii.

and children, are but weaklings like ourselves—to mourn and rejoice with—all subject to the sway of Death. There is but one Place of Peace, but one Source of True Reliance.

"The Goal of which the sacred sciences all sing the praises, for which the sacred practices all speak, desiring which men enter Brahman's service, that Goal to thee I now succinctly tell. It is the Oṁ!*

"In very truth this Word is Brahman; this Word in very truth is the Supreme; in very truth this Word who understandeth, whate'er he longeth for, the same is his.

"This means is the best, this means is the highest; one knowing this means grows great in God's Home.

"The Singer† is not born, nor dies He ever; He came not anywhence, nor anything is He. Unborn, eternal, everlasting He, ancient; unslain He remains, though body be slain.

"If slayer thinks he slays, if slain thinks he is slain, both these know naught; He slays not, nor is slain.

"Smaller than small, yet greater than great, in the heart of the creature the Self doth repose;

* That is, the Word, the Logos, of Hellenistic theosophy, the Amen of Egyptian mystogogy.

† *Sc.*, of the Word.

That, free from desire, he sees, with his grief gone — the Greatness of Self, by Favour of God. *

"Sitting He travels far; † lying He speeds everywhere; who but one's Self can know that Self who joys, yet doth not joy?

"When once he knows the Self, 'mid bodies bodiless, amid the infirm firm, great and wide-spread, the wise hath no more grief.

"This Self is not attainable by explanation, nor yet by mental grasp, nor hearing many times; by him whomso He chooses, by him is He obtained. For him the Self His proper form reveals.

"No one who hath not ceased from evil doing, nor one with senses uncontrolled, nor one whose mind is uncollected, nor one whose mind is not at peace, can gain that Self by knowledge merely." ‡

It is in the Self that we find the source of all

* The Greatness is the Æon of the Gnostics, and the Favour of God, the Grace or Goodwill of the Trismegistic and of the Christianized Gnōsis.

† As Kṛishṇa explains to Arjuna in the *Jñāneshvarī* (Adhyāya vi.), that Old Māhrāti mystical commentary on the *Gītā*: "Whether one would set out to the Bloom of the East, or come to the Chambers of the West, *without moving*, O Holder of the Bow, is *the travelling on that road.* In this path, to whatever place one would go, the *same one's own self becomes.* How shall I easily describe this? Thou thyself shalt experience it."

‡ *Kaṭhopaniṣhad*, ii. 15–24; Mead and Chaṭṭopādyāya, i. 57–59; Deussen, pp. 274, 275.

moral sanction. It is the "still small voice" —the "Voice of the Silence"—the Voice that grows into a roar of thunder if the Law is transgressed. Then it becomes the "Great Terror"—the one thing that the disciple fears, for it is by the Law of his higher nature that he *condemns himself* to continued bondage in the meshes of the kārmic net of which he has supplied threads for the weaving by neglect of duty.

As in the Great World, so in the little world; as in the Universal Self, so in the individual self; as in the Cosmos, so in man. "That art thou!"

As It emanated Itself, so dost thou emanate thyself, O little man! Thou canst give birth to Chaos or to the Son of Righteousness, an thou wilt. Therefore, choose!

Transgression of the Law creates difference, and so a departure from the Self; union with the Law provides the conditions for the Self to show forth its Glory. Let us, then, learn from what takes place in the Great World "unconsciously," what must be done in the little world by the *conscious will* of him who would be free.

"'In the Beyond-being state was this * in the beginning; from That indeed it did take birth as being. That did Itself Itself create; thence That is Self-created called.'

* The universe, or man.

"What verily that Self-created is, that surely Nectar is. That Nectar, in good sooth, this Soul possessing, a thing of Bliss becomes. For who indeed could live, who breathe, should not this Bliss in the Quintessence be? This verily it is which Bliss bestows.

"When, then, in truth, in That—transcending sight and self, beyond defining, void of base—this Soul as its Stand-by * the Fearless surely finds, into the Fearless then doth he depart.

"For should he make the smallest difference in That, then is there fear for him. This is, in very deed, the fear of him who unreflecting knows.

"'From fear through Him wind blows; from fear the sun doth rise.'" †

This seems to suggest the difference between agitated motion and peace; that is, motion between two points and not unity. Death is thus called King of Terrors, because he is king of the agitated realms.

And again:

"All this, whatever moves, come forth from That, in life vibrates—a mighty terror That, a

* Reliance.

† *Taittirīyakopaniṣhad*, ii. 7; Mead and Chaṭṭopādhyāya, ii. 26, 27; Deussen, pp. 231, 232.

weapon raised aloft. They who know That, immortal they become." *

For no man can flee from the Self, no man can escape from his conscience. The Law enfolds him in his own doings, from which there is no escape until he takes refuge with that Law. As the King-Psalmist says:

"Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy Presence?

"If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in Hell, behold, Thou art there also." †

For:

"Both He who here is in man, and He who there is in the Sun—One verily is He.

"He who thus knows, departing from this world, passing into this self formed by [the juice of] food, passing into this self formed by vitality, passing into this self mind-formed, passing into this self by reason formed, passing into this self by bliss informed; proceeding through these worlds, having what food he wills, what form he wills, this Song he singing sits:

* *Kaṭhopaniṣhad*, Vallī vi. 2; Mead and Chaṭṭopādhyāya, i. 75; Deussen, p. 284.

† Ps. cxxxix. 7, 8.

"O wonder, wonder, wonder!
Food I; food I; food I!
Food-eater I; food-eater I; food-eater I!
Song-maker I; song-maker I; song-maker I!
First-born of Righteousness am I!
Prior to the Gods, the Heart of the Immortal!
Who giveth me, thus surely doth he keep me!
I, food, food-eater eat!
The world entire have I pervaded—
Light sun-like I!" *

He who has thus conquered, who has become the First-born of Righteousness, who verily is a Twice-born (Dvija), a true Knower of the Highest (Brahma-vid), he verily is the True Sun in the Highest, for:

"The Sun is Brahman; so runs the instruction. Thereon is this explanation:

"This world in the beginning was non-existent. The non-existent was existent. It arose. An Egg evolved itself. It lay there, for so long as a year. It broke in twain. The Shells were one of Silver, the other of Gold. . . .

"What came to birth is the Sun there. When He was born shouts of joy arose." †

Here we have the whole story of the spiritual evolution in man: the darkness of the soul before it begins to long for final Release, for true Wisdom; the alchemical separation of the

* *Taittirīyakopaniṣhad*, iii. 10; Mead and Chaṭṭopādhyāya, ii. 41, 42; Deussen, pp. 239, 240.

† *Chhāndogyopaniṣhad*, III. xix. 1–3; Deussen, p. 116.

Subtle from the Fixed, of the Higher from the Lower, of Spirit from Matter, and the birth of the unclouded Mind, the Son of Righteousness. Only when the Master is born do all the Powers rejoice and mighty shouts of gladness rend the universe.

"In Whom Heaven, Earth and Interspace are woven, Mind and all Lives, Him and Him only know to be the Self. Away with other words; He is the Bridge * to the immortal.

"As spokes in nave just where the channels meet, within, that 'He' does move, in divers form appearing. With Oṁ thus meditate on Self. Peace unto you for crossing o'er the Darkness!

"Who knoweth all and is all wise, whose is this Glory in the world, this Self indeed is set in Brahm's bright Shrine, the Æther; Him on all sides the wise behold with knowledge, face to face—Him flashing forth, All-bliss, transcending death.

"The Heart's knot is dissolved; all doubts are cut apart; deeds † perish, when both the higher and the lower That ‡ have once been seen.

* He is the Mediator, the true Pontifex Maximus. The Christ is He on whom we rely, the Bridge, the Something Fixed, traversing something in motion.

† Karmāṇi.

‡ That is, Brahman, both unmanifest and manifest.

"Within man's radiant highest vesture is stainless, partless Brahm. That is the pure Light of all lights, That which Self-knowers know.

"There* shines no sun, nor moon and stars, nor do these lightnings shine, much less this fire. When He Shines forth, all things shine after Him; by Brahman's shining shine all here below.

"Ay, this immortal Brahman is before, Brahm is behind, on right and left, stretched out above below. This Brahman surely is this All. He is the Best."†

The "Heart's knot" of the fourth shloka may, I think, be taken for the personality, the that which conditions us as an ātmic or spiritual "spark," and not Ātman proper; the "knot" is that which makes a man himself and prevents his being everybody. The "Heart" of every one is Ātman, one and the same Spirit; it is only this "knot" which keeps one definitely somebody.

The last shloka but one is truly admirable. If everything were self-luminous, nothing would shine. The sun cannot shine without darkness. Its rays would not go forth, if there were equal

* *Sc.*, in that Light, in Ātman.

† That is, the Summum Bonum or Highest Good, the Goal. *Muṇḍakopaniṣhad*, II. ii. 5–11; Mead and Chaṭṭopādhyāya, i. 122–124; Deussen, pp. 553, 554.

lightness outside itself. So therefore in Ātman, in the Light of all lights, the sun does not shine; there is no moon, no flashings. It is above and beyond all directions.

The doctrine is mystic and mysterious, the antipodes of the *apparent* clearness of modern scientific theories, "for the Gods love mystery and hate familiarity," as Ṛiṣhi Yājñavalkya says in the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*. And yet again more mysteriously than ever:

"That which is that bright space* within the heart; in that this Man resides, innate with mind, transcending death, with brilliancy† innate.

"Between the throat's two pillars, there, what like a nipple hangs, that's Indra's‡ birth-track; there, where the hair-ends start, forcing the skull's two surfaces apart.

"Bhūḥ!—thus; in Fire one rests.
Bhuvaḥ!—so; in Air.
Suvaḥ!—thus; in Sun.
Mahaḥ!—so; in Brahm.

"Self-kingship he attains, lordship of mind he wins, lord over speech, lord over sight is he, of hearing lord, lord he of understanding.

"Then he becometh Brahm, Whose Body is

* Æther, Quintessence, Ākāsha.

† Or Golden.

‡ That is, the Soul as a God going forth unto God.

Bright Space,* whose Self is Truth, the Pleasure-ground † of Life, in Whom Mind finds its Bliss, replete with Peace, transcending Death.

"Thus worship then, O thou who for the Ancient Art hast fit become." ‡

The Ancient Art is Yoga. Physiologically, or psychophysiologically, the "heart," § the throat, and the parietal suture of the skull, localize these *chakras* or centres of what is called the *suṣhumṇā nāḍī*; || they are, as it were, nodes where three currents, or the paths of three "fires," ¶ cross.

The "words of power," or *mantrāḥ*, used in this Ancient Art, correspond with the states of Earth, Interspace, Heaven, and Beyond, or, again, the so-called Waking, Dreaming, Deep-sleeping, and Fourth states.

And yet once again, to remind us finally of

* Ākāsha.

† *Cf.* the Hermes-Invocations in the Greek Magic Papyri: "Thy everlasting Revelling-place is set above," and "Joyous Good Daimon (Spirit), for whom the Heaven is thy Revelling-place." See my *Hermes*, i. 84 and 97.

‡ *Taittirīyakopaniṣhad*, i. 6; Mead and Chaṭṭopādhyāya, ii. 12, 13; Deussen, p. 219.

§ The "cave" or "pit" rather, in the region of the solar plexus.

|| Lit., the channel, rich in pleasure or happiness, highly blessed.

¶ Iḍā, Piṅgalā, and Suṣhumṇā, three forms of the Kuṇḍalinī Shakti or Serpentine Power.

the nature of true Self-reliance, Reliance on the Self—that Self which:

"Does not age with the age of the body, nor is it killed with the wounding of the body. This is the true City of the Highest. In it all desires are contained. It is the Self, sinless, ageless, deathless, griefless, hungerless and thirstless. Its Will is True Will; its Counsel True Counsel." *

And so I bring to an end these brief comparative studies in general theosophy; and I would recommend them to the attention of all true lovers of religion, not for what I have written, but because of the flowers of thought and intuition, of gnosis and devotion, which have been culled from the fair garden of many a soul on whom the Spiritual Sun has in the past poured His rays of blessing.

* *Chhāndogyopaniṣhad*, i. 5; Deussen, p. 189.

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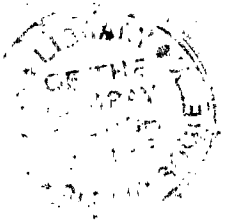

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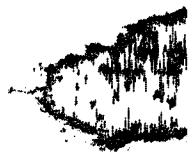

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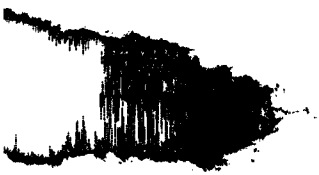

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